This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

B 452223 DUPL

Digitized by Google

PRESENTED BY
THE AUTHOR

Digitized by Google

BX
6495
.H36
H4
1

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM E. HATCHER

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM E. HATCHER

D. D., LL. D., L. H. D

A BIOGRAPHY

BY HIS SON
ELDRIDGE B. HATCHER

W. C. Hill Printing Co., Richmond, Va.

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM E. HATCH[illegible]

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM E. HATCHER

D. D., LL. D., L. H. D.

A BIOGRAPHY

BY HIS SON
ELDRIDGE B. HATCHER

W. C. HILL PRINTING CO., RICHMOND, VA.

Digitized by Google

COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY
ELDRIDGE R. HATCHER

Digitized by Google

TO MY WIFE

ANNA DENSON HATCHER

WHO BY HER HOPEFUL INTEREST AND CO-OPERATION
IN MY WORK OF WRITING THIS BIOGRAPHY
GREATLY CHEERED ME IN MY LABORS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FOREWORD

This book aims to give a picture of a soul. It will disappoint those who are seeking a chronicle of all the travels, acts and words of William E. Hatcher; but to those who desire to view the man behind the deeds it opens its pages. It is the portrait of a person rather than the record of a career. The richest treasures in human lives are hidden beneath the surface, and few things are more interesting than the traits and characteristics, the struggles and triumphs of a soul. The author has endeavored to select those incidents from the life of William E. Hatcher which flash light upon his unique personality and unveil him to the reader.

Events apparently trivial often make startling revelations. Plutarch, in his Life of Alexander the Great, says:

"It must be borne in mind that my design is not to write histories but lives. And the most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtues or vices in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their characters and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever."

296465

Digitized by Google

To the many friends who have sent letters and anecdotes for use in this volume the author begs leave here to return his hearty thanks. From Dr. Hatcher's own books, "Life of J. B. Jeter," "The Pastor and the Sunday School," "John Jasper," and "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years," he has made many quotations. From *The Religious Herald* and the *Dispatch* of Richmond, Va., and the *Baptist World* of Louisville, Ky., he has made copious extracts. He has also quoted from the *Standard* of Chicago, the *Baptist Courier* of South Carolina and possibly other papers and of them he wishes here to make grateful mention.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I.
1834–1848.
ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD 1–11

CHAPTER II.
1848–1854.
SCHOOL DAYS AND CONVERSION.—TEACHING SCHOOL.—DECISION TO PREACH 12–18

CHAPTER III.
1854–1858.
FOUR YEARS AT RICHMOND COLLEGE 19–29

CHAPTER IV.
1858–1861.
FIRST YEAR OF MANCHESTER PASTORATE 30–39

CHAPTER V.
1861–1866.
THE CIVIL WAR.—MARRIAGE.—REVIVAL EXPERIENCES . . . 40–51

CHAPTER VI.
1866–1867.
THE STRUGGLE LETTERS 52–69

CHAPTER VII.
1867–1868.
BALTIMORE PASTORATE.—LECTURE ON THE DANCE 70–76

CHAPTER VIII.
1868–1872.
PETERSBURG.—PERSISTENT DRILL IN SERMON MAKING AND IN LITERARY COMPOSITION.—INTEREST IN BOYS 77–88

CHAPTER IX.
1872–1875.
THE MEMORIAL MOVEMENT.—THE AMBULANCE CORPS.—UNCLE SANTA'S VISIT.—THE BOYS' MEETING 89–101

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

1875–1876.

RICHMOND.—RICHMOND COLLEGE ADDRESS.—BOYS' MEETING.—DIALOGUES 102–112

CHAPTER XI.

1876–1877.

AMUSING PULPIT EXPERIENCES.—HUMOR AND WIT 113–124

CHAPTER XII.

1877–1878.

INTEREST IN YOUNG PREACHERS.—PASTORAL VISITING.—CAREFULNESS IN PREPARING PUBLIC ADDRESSES.—DAILY SCHEDULE . 125–137

CHAPTER XIII.

1879–1880.

BALTIMORE VISIT. — FONDNESS FOR GAMES.—HOSPITALITY.—ADDRESS ON DR. JETER 138–151

CHAPTER XIV.

1880–1881.

REPARTEE.—CALL TO LOUISVILLE 152–163

CHAPTER XV.

1881.

HIS SUNDAYS.—PREACHING.—PUBLIC PRAYERS 164–173

CHAPTER XVI.

1882.

EDITOR RELIGIOUS HERALD.—IN THE SOCIAL CIRCLE.—THE CARAVAN.—THE BAPTISTS 174–184

CHAPTER XVII.

1882–1883.

PASTORAL VISITS AND PASTORAL EXPERENCES.—TRIP TO TEXAS AND MEXICO.—DEATH OF THE TWINS.—THE CARAVAN . . .185–194

CHAPTER XVIII.

1883.

COTTAGE FOR COUNTRY PASTOR.—A CITY PASTORATE.—CONVENTION AT BALTIMORE.—ON THE WING.—"ALONG THE BAPTIST LINES" 195–204

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

1884–1885.

FRIENDSHIP.—D. L. MOODY.—VISITS TO THE COUNTRY.—CHARLES H. PRATT.—AIDING STUDENTS 205–219

CHAPTER XX.

1885–1886.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.—CULPEPER MEETINGS.—WEEKLY LETTERS.—YOUNG MEN IN HIS HOME.—LECTURE TRIPS.—THE FRIEND OF COUNTRY CHURCHES 220–233

CHAPTER XXI.

1886–1887.

CHURCH TROUBLES.—COLLECTION IN HIS CHURCH.—THE CELEBRATED CL——— MURDER CASE 234–252

CHAPTER XXII.

1887.

AN EVENTFUL PRAYER MEETING.—SEVERAL WEEKS' REVIVAL CAMPAIGN.—CORRECTING HIS CHILDREN'S DICTION.—SUNDAY SCHEDULE.—"LIFE OF J. B. JETER" 253–266

CHAPTER XXIII.

1887–1888.

LOVE FOR BEDFORD.—"LIFE OF J. B. JETER" CRITICIZED.—DRIVING OVER THE BOY.—GENUINENESS.—ORIGINALITY 267–279

CHAPTER XXIV.

1888.

TRIP TO EUROPE.—PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.—BAPTIST CONGRESS 280–292

CHAPTER XXV.

1889.

CHURCH DEDICATIONS.—TAKING COLLECTIONS.—CONVENTION AT MEMPHIS.—INFLUENCE IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.—THE CHESTERFIELD MEETING 293–306

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI.

1889–1891.

TRIPS TO CHESTERFIELD.—PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF CHURCH TROUBLES. — EDITORIAL CRITICISMS. — NEW BUILDING. — INTEREST IN PLAIN PEOPLE.—PUTTING HONOR UPON OTHERS.—KINDNESS TO YOUNG PREACHERS 307–325

CHAPTER XXVII.

1891–1892.

ENTERING NEW BUILDING.—HUMILITY.—BROKEN FRIENDSHIP.—WAKE FOREST REVIVAL.—CHESTERFIELD.—HIS NEW BOY . . 326–345

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1893–1894.

PLAYING QUOITS.—"UNCLE DAVID".—THE YOUNG PEOPLE.—SERMON BEFORE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.—DEDICATION OF THE NEW GRACE STREET CHURCH BUILDING.—MOODY MEETINGS 346–364

CHAPTER XXIX.

1894–1896.

Y. M. C. A. COLLECTION.—EAGERNESS TO WIN.—CHRISTIAN UNION.—RICHMOND COLLEGE.—TOPICAL NOTES.—PURCHASE OF HOME AT FORK UNION.—CHICAGO ADDRESS 365–378

CHAPTER XXX.

1896–1897.

A SHOCKING DISASTER.—ARDUOUS BUILDING CAMPAIGN.—REVIVAL MEETING IN GRANVILLE, OHIO 379–398

CHAPTER XXXI.

1897.

ADDRESS ON THE "EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY".—THOUGHTFULNESS OF OTHERS.—VARIED JOURNEYS AND LABORS.—REVIVAL MEETINGS AT TOLEDO, OHIO.—EXALTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL 399–413

CHAPTER XXXII.

1898.

DR. C. C. MEADOR.—THE WHITSITT CONTROVERSY.—THE BAPTISTS 414–433

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1898–1900.

Passion for Improvement.—Preachers' House Party.—Fork Union Academy Started.—Sickness.—The Novel.—Varied Labors 434–451

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1900–1902.

His Chinese Boy.—Coleman M———.—Dedication of his New Building.—Acceptance of the Richmond College Call.—Resignation.—Educational Work.—Letters to Children.—Rockefeller Campaign 452–467

CHAPTER XXXV.

1902–1903.

His Grandchildren.— Sunday School Lectures.—Versatility.—The Campaign for Bristol.—Christmas Reunion.—Patience With Boys.—Saint Joseph, Mo.—Editorial Paragraphs 468–486

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1903–1905.

Welcoming Grandfather.—Country People.—The Louisville Seminary.—Tributes to Drs. McDonald and Meador.—Collection for the Seminary.—Convention at Kansas City 487–500

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1905–1907.

Introducing New Pastors.—Academy Details.—Relation to the Academy.—Disappointments.—Old Age.—Strenuous Activity.—Weighted With Many Burdens.—Battling With Sickness 501–517

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1907.

Commences Writing His New Book.—Biography.—Colgate Lectures.—Delineating Character.—Working at High Pressure.—Address at Indianapolis on "The Making of the American Gentleman" 518–536

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1908.

Meetings at Eutaw Place, Baltimore; Franklin College, Ind.; Tremont Temple, Boston, and Colgate University, N. Y.—Convention at Hot Springs.—Varied Activities.—Railroad Accident.—"John Jasper" 537–560

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XL.

1908–1909.

With the Academy Boys.—The Academy and the Community.—Character Training.—"Grace Street" Anniversary.—Reminiscences.—Manifold Trips and Labors.—Ah Fong's Graduation.—Monuments.—A Personal Sermon.—Personal Characteristics 561–585

CHAPTER XLI.

1910.

Serious Sickness at Fort Wayne, Ind.—Article on "The Grippe".—Clothes.—Letter to Dr. C. H. Ryland.—Selecting the Title.—"Along the Trail of the Friendly Years".—Messages About His New Book 586–611

CHAPTER XLII.

1910–1911.

Games With the Grandchildren.—Continued Tributes to his Book.—Interest in People.—Caught in a Hotel Fire.—Bluefield 612–640

CHAPTER XLIII.

1911.

Continuous Activities.—Meetings at Pocomoke.—Address at Meredith College.—Baptist World Alliance.—Correspondence.—His Enemies.—Baltimore State Mission Banquet.—Address Before College Trustees.—Optimism.—Old Age . 641–666

CHAPTER XLIV.

1912.

Labors in Florida.—Campaign for the Orangeburg School.—Farewell Meeting With Ah Fong.—Labors in South Carolina.—Working While it is Day.—His Portrait Unveiled . 667–684

CHAPTER XLV.

1912.

Busy Here and There.—Address at Judge Witt's Funeral.—The Grandchildren.—A Crowded Week.—Happy Days at Careby.—The End 685–696

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
William E. Hatcher. Frontispiece	
Careby Church, England, where are the tombs of the Hatcher family of the 16th Century	4
The Birthplace and Boyhood Home of William E. Hatcher	6
William E. Hatcher, at age of 30	62
Mrs. William E. Hatcher	78
William E. Hatcher, at age of about 38	88
The Grace Street Baptist Church, Richmond, Va	102
The Richmond Home, 608 W. Grace Street	146
William E. Hatcher	308
The New Grace Street Baptist Church	326
The Grace Street Baptist Church, after the fire	382
William E. Hatcher	434
Grace Street Baptist Church Rebuilt	438
Grandfather and Virginia	440
Grandfather and William	456
Careby Hall, the Fork Union Home	462
William E. Hatcher	484
William E. Hatcher	524
At the Albemarle Association	580
Grandfather and Anna	592
Fork Union Military Academy	618

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD

1834–1848

"WILLIAM, are you very fond of sweet potatoes?" asked the father.

"Yes."

"Come, let's go out to the patch and see how they are getting along." This invitation to the potato patch was given by an old farmer, Mr. Henry Hatcher, to his thirteen year old boy, William E., about sixty-seven years ago at their mountain home in Bedford County, Va. William had seemed reluctant to doing any work on the farm and his father was seeking to cure him of his apparent laziness.

They reached the patch and the father began to pull up the weeds from around the vines, and in a few moments he called out in a bright tone: "William, come and help me get this grass out of the way."

William joined in the grass pulling but in no happy mood and soon he said to his father in a determined manner:

"I have come to the conclusion that God does not intend for me to work in the dirt."

The words cut the father as with a knife. Without losing his temper and with a gentle touch of satire he sorrowfully replied: "I begin to think, my son, that that is true and I have been studying why God made you at all and I have come to the conclusion that he created you to starve as a warning for all idle boys that may come on later."

"No; I hope not," said William. "I hope that I will always have enough to eat, but I do not think that I will have to dig it out of the ground."

Digitized by Google

A shadow passed across the old man's face and he said no more. This positive—almost rebellious—speech of the boy was the outcropping of a trait that dwelt also in the father, for we are told that the old gentleman "had a will and a way of his own" and that while his spirit was not stormy, nor harsh, yet when he said a thing "all interrogation points were taken down and the thing was settled."

In fact, this spirit of protest which we find in William at the potato patch, seems to have traveled down to him from his ancestors through several generations; for in 1652 we find it breaking out in another William Hatcher in the Virginia House of Burgesses. This William Hatcher arose one day and withstood the Speaker of the House to his face by exclaiming: "The mouth of this house is an atheist, a blasphemer and a devil!" For this inflammatory indulgence, Mr. Hatcher was forced to apologize to the Speaker and, after paying a heavy fine, was dismissed. But he was evidently an important factor in the public councils of the Colony, for he was afterwards re-elected and served as a member at two later sessions.

This defiant old progenitor was the first of the Hatchers to set foot on American soil and was styled "William the Emigrant." He was once presented by the grand jury for not attending the services of the established church,—such attendance at that time being required by the mother country. If, as Sacred Writ informs us, man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, no less did this Mr. William Hatcher seem born for conflict with the existing order. "Every great man is a non-conformist" says Emerson and while we are not prepared to claim for Mr. Hatcher a place among the great, we can safely pronounce him a non-conformist.

When next we hear of him he is involved in the famous "Bacon's Rebellion," which was aimed at the English government, and which was called by the historian Bancroft, "the early harbinger of American Nationality." This uprising occurred on the neck of land on which Mr. William Hatcher lived. In that movement he was an active factor, and for

Digitized by Google

the pleasure of indulging his revolutionary tendences he was commanded to pay ten thousand pounds of tobacco. But mercy interposed—because of Mr. Hatcher's age—and he was let down to a lower figure and hogs were substituted for tobacco,—the fine being 8,000 pounds of pork, which he was to furnish to "His Majesty's soldiers." When this writer recalls the aversion to swine meat which clung to the William E. Hatcher who is the subject of this memoir, he begins to wonder if William did not receive from his rugged old forefather something else besides his defiant, independent spirit.

It is said that "every individual is an omnibus in which all his ancestors ride." We can not call the roll of all the forbears of the youthful William and yet it is fitting that we at least take note of his distinguished lineage. Many people shy off from genealogies and we do not forget the saying of the old philosopher, Phaedrus, many centuries ago, that "it is indeed a glorious thing to be well descended, but the glory belongs to our ancestors." It is no wish of this writer to deck the youthful William in glory borrowed from his progenitors; and yet it is well that we turn our gaze towards those whose blood, several centuries afterwards, traveled in his veins.

The home of the Hatchers in England was at Careby in Lincolnshire, and inscriptions on the quaint tombs in the Careby Churchyard and the records in the community testify to the high rank held by the Hatchers as early as the 16th century. On one of the tombs we find this inscription, dated 1564:

"Here is interred the remains of Sir ———— Hatcher of the ancient family of Hatchers, for many generations the lords of this manor."

Some of the Hatchers fought in Cromwell's army,—among them Sir Thomas Hatcher, a member of Parliament, who because of his championship of Cromwell's cause was included in the list of "traitors" mentioned in Newcastles' Proclamation of the 17th of January, 1643. This same Sir Thomas Hatcher was, with Sir Harry Vane, and other Commissioners

Digitized by Google

sent to Scotland "to treat of a nearer union and confederacy with the Scottish nation and to help frame the famous Solemn League and Covenant, which was adopted by Parliament Sept. 17th, 1640." But we are now getting dangerously near to rulers, and if we become entangled in such high places we might be tempted to forget the little mountain lad in Bedford, who must henceforth—for us—hold the center of the stage. The journey back from Careby England, to Bedford County, Virginia, however, is a long one and in returning to the boy William let us pause at William's grandfather, Jeremiah Hatcher, for he possessed two shining traits which seem to have found their way into William's soul. One was a passion for preaching and the other was a passion for helpfulness. This Jeremiah Hatcher was a man of considerable means and, after being pastor in Chesterfield County, he settled in Bedford and preached the gospel throughout a large section of the country without financial reward. He erected a church building at his own expense for the people which was known far and wide as "Hatcher's Meeting House" and his religious work, done simply for the love of the work and of the people, wrought a signal transformation in that portion of the country.

This man had three grandsons who became preachers; William E. Hatcher, Harvey Hatcher, and Jeremiah B. Jeter, all of whom were born in the same "shed room" at the old Hatcher Homestead.

When William was four years old the brightest star in his sky went out. His mother died. She was a Presbyterian, was "fair and cultured" and William was said to resemble her. Into her room that day they carried him to look upon her silent form and next he remembered going with the procession out under the cherry tree where they put her body in the ground.

The burial is over, the mourning friends have scattered to their homes,—maybe one or two put their hands tenderly on the head of little William, or possibly kissed him as he looked with his big eyes on the people and on the new made red dirt

Digitized by Google

CHURCH AT CAREBY, ENGLAND
Where are the tombs of the Hatcher family of the 16th Century

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

under which they had put his mother and understood not what it meant. When the little fellow turned back to the house he dreamed not of the lonely days ahead of him. His mother had spent her last hours in praying that he might become a preacher, but she was gone and who now would care what became of this four year old motherless boy.

There sits the father—a rugged old farmer—fifty-four years old, but today—the day of the funeral—he looks older than ever. Yonder are the children, three half brothers, two half sisters, and his own brother Harvey, and all of them older than William. His father was not a professing christian, but was a regular attendant upon the church; he loved his Bible and was highly respected in his community. He had one marked trait and that was his devotion to his baby boy. Every night William slept in his father's bed and in the day he was carried in his fathers arms.

The grass came upon the new grave; the cherry tree grew older and the months and even the years moved by, but while they brought many birthdays to William they brought him few pleasures.

One day old "Father Harris", pastor of Mount Hermon Church, rode up to the home and spent the night. On the next morning little William was sitting by the window in the parlor. Breakfast was announced and as the venerable minister was walking from the bed room through the parlor to the dining room his eye fell upon the boy at the window and he noticed that he was absorbed in a book. He turned out of his way, walked up to the youthful reader laid his hand gently upon his head and in a very mellow, gracious tone said: "My boy I hope God will call you to preach the gospel." Already William had been informed that his grandfathers on his mother's and on his father's side were both Baptist preachers and that his mother had spent her last breath in praying that God would make "William and Harvey" preachers.

An accident happened to William that left its life mark upon his soul as well as upon his body. Out on the farm one day

Digitized by Google

they were cutting strips of wood—or splits as they called them—on which to hang the meats and he was standing by looking on.

"Pa" said he "I want to see if I can't make a split."

The indulgent old father handed over the knife and wood and the boy went vigorously to work, when the knife slipped and buried itself in his tender hand. A few days after that his sister Margaret set out on a winter's day on a visit to her married sister, fifteen miles distant, and William was mounted upon a second horse to accompany her and bring her horse back. All went well on the outward journey. On the return however, he had to lead the other horse; the cut place on his hand pulled open and he caught cold in the hand and for nearly fifteen miles the pain increased. It opened a dark chapter in the lad's life. For two months he said he almost died with pain. The boy's sufferings and moans threw the household, especially the old father, into a panic. What could be done? Medical attention in that neighborhood was of the rudest kind. One day a young fellow visiting at the home took a glance at the injured hand and called out boastfully: "If you send for my father he'll cure that in a few days."

Alas, the suggestion was adopted and the father, who was something of a quack, was sent for. He tinkered with the hand and did it great damage.

For two months he kept his throbbing hand on a pillow and for two years he carried it in a sling. One day a gentleman hearing of his sufferings came over and, as the father told him about William's experiences, he said: "That boy has suffered four deaths." It was his left hand. A bone had sought to work its way towards the cut place but it worked in the wrong direction. The little hand was drawn together and while it did not become misshapen in any disfiguring way, yet it was hindered in its growth and carried forever afterwards the signs of its racking experience.

Ah, those were torturing days and weeks for him. How often he must have held his hand and looked out into the

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM E. HATCHER'S BIRTHPLACE AND BOYHOOD HOME

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

future wondering if relief would ever, ever come. While other boys were romping over the hills and shouting in happy glee he was groaning and crying in pain. After two years—and how long they must have seemed—his hand healed, after a fashion, and came out of the sling. No one understood it then, but those months of suffering through which William passed kindled sympathies within him that were destined to play a large part in his future career.

His home nestled amid the mountains with the Peaks of Otter looming in the distance; "The Peaks" were spoken of as one mountain. "It looked so high and blue" he said "that I thought I could climb to Heaven on it." There were a few slaves on the plantation to serve the family and the home was one of comfort and respectability but life was simple and rude. Mail was received only once a week and he said that he did not know that up to his seventeenth year he had for himself as much as five dollars.

It must also be mentioned that he was frail, sickly and sensitive. The spirit of independence that had broken out in the conversation with his father about the weeds still lay within him. For example he hated for a boy to get an advantage over him. He was once given one of his big brother Henry's suits to wear. He presented a ludicrous spectacle in the ill-fitting and well-worn garments. His soul stormed in revolt as Henry seemed to enjoy the sight and he informed him that the time would come when he, Henry, would be glad to wear his cast off clothes,—a prophecy which was fulfilled in later years much to the hilarious merriment of all the household, except Henry.

He wanted no one to triumph over him and even as a boy he had signal success in maintaining his supremacy. On one occasion he was out in the woods with his big brother Harvey, and—as was generally the case on such hunting expeditions,—Harvey wielded the gun while William carried the game. Harvey was an expert with the gun and William had no taste nor skill in that direction and the big brother naturally con-

Digitized by Google

sidered it a waste of time and ammunition for William to be using the weapon.

"Harvey let me take a shot" called out William that day as they stood before a tall tree in the top of which a squirrel had neatly curled himself up amid the leaves and at which Harvey had fired several shots without effect.

"Oh, you could'nt hit him" said Harvey with awful disdain as he loaded for another shot which also proved ineffectual.

"Let me try" pleaded William a second time. The brother with increased contempt hooted at the idea of his hitting such a distant mark but finally, after several failures to bring down the game, he reluctantly remarked, "If I miss him this time I will let you shoot once just to keep you quiet."

Away went the shot but the squirrel remained untouched. Hastily the gun was loaded and handed to William with instructions to hurry and be over with it. William lifted the gun, looked far away up into the tall tree at the place where the squirrel was said to be, pointed the weapon at the spot and pulled the trigger. Bang went the gun; there was a rustle of the leaves at the top and down came the squirrel tumbling at their feet.

Every Saturday William went to Chilton's mill with the corn and one day the owner of the mill said to him: "William, come and have dinner with me." He went and ever after that he was glad to go because of the many fine books which were there to read. He found himself attracted to the young man in charge of the mill—C. C. Meador,—and these two souls were drawn together in a friendship that was broken only by death. Thereafter Saturday was his red letter day, for it meant "books and Meador."

As a boy in the mountains with no mother to love him, having to battle against sickness and loneliness, blamed by some for his supposed indolence, with his own brother Harvey much bigger than himself and temperamentally very different from him, he seemed to be put on the defensive and while it did not make him sulky, or sore, or disagreeable, yet it made him sensi-

Digitized by Google

tive. He said "I fairly died for appreciation. I did not know what was the matter, but I suffered unutterably for the want of a mother, for an intelligent sympathy, for some one who could mark my little sorrows, dress my little wounds, wipe off my tears when I cried and kiss me when I went to bed."

"I really believe" said he "that I never forgot one appreciative or commendatory word spoken to me during my boyhood. I craved the good will of others. There was an old gentleman to whose house I sometimes had to go,—Mr. Joseph Rees, by name . . . He could tell me things that I did not know and that drew me to him. He had a strain of cordiality of sympathy which I always felt when in contact with him. He believed in me, complimented me on little things and startled me by little predictions as to my future." How agreeable it would be if this old neighbor had only written down for us what it was that he saw in the boy William on which he had based his predictions.

We have already discovered that William was a boy with decision of character, eagerness for knowledge, capacity for friendship, an unwillingness to being triumphed over, a sensitiveness and a patience under prolonged and terrible suffering. Even the incident at the potato patch hints at something more about William than his resolute spirit. It suggests that at that early date he felt that God had something for him to do in the world.

"I was a great knitter" he said "and swept the floor and set the table, etc. After my sisters all married I kept house for my three brothers and my father. There was then no lady in the house. I carried the keys. I began this at twelve years of age". A cheerless picture in this—a mountain home without wife, mother or sister. When his sister married and left the home he said "I cried my eyes out about it."

One day the family was thrown into a happy flutter by the announcement that "Cousin Jerry" was coming. Dr. Jeremiah B. Jeter, tall and patriarchal, was then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., and the leading Baptist

Digitized by Google

minister of the state, if not of the South. The coming of this eminent kinsman always marked an epoch with the family. The old father would take a new lease on life in these visits from "Cousin Jerry" and his dormant powers seemed to awake in the presence of his gifted relative.

One afternoon Dr. Jeter and the father started across the yard to walk over to "Cousin Tom's" on a visit and William followed them. After the visit and on their return homewards as they were getting over a rail fence that lay across their path they paused and remained seated on the top of the fence. William picked up a soft rock, sat down in one of the corners of the fence and with his knife and a piece of clay began to carve out a book. In a few minutes Dr. Jeter said:

"How are your children getting along?"

"Very well, indeed; all of them are doing well,—that is," and here his voice hesitated and dropped a little "all of them except one."

"Which child can this one be?" wondered William.

The father took up each of his children by name beginning with the oldest and coming down the line. William listened eagerly and his boyish heart began to flame with fury that one of the children should be causing his father trouble. He listened for the name of the guilty one, determined to wreck his vengeance upon him. Down the list came the father giving high praise to each one until only Harvey and William were left.

"And so Harvey, my own brother, is the villain" said William to himself, but to his consternation, Harvey like the other children was commended.

"As to William, my youngest,—" he said in a tender, saddened tone, "he gives me more concern and unhappiness than all my other children together and I tremble for his future."

A small tornado of shame and confusion was raging in the fence corner. "Is it possible?" exclaimed the Doctor in pained surprise. "Ah, I am sorry indeed to hear it. Too bad; too bad," and then in a solemn way he asked "Is he vicious?"

That word "vicious" made the boy in the fence corner jump

Digitized by Google

as if he had been shot. It was a brand new word to him and as pronounced by the Doctor it seemed loaded with all the evils of the lower regions. Tremblingly he waited for his father's reply and the lights flamed out once more for him as his father answered: "Why No; he is not vicious; he is the most affectionate of all my children and would never get out of sight of me if he could help it."

"What is the matter with him?" the Doctor inquired.

"He is of no account upon the earth for work" "said the father." "He hates any kind of work in the dirt and says that he does not believe that God has made him to work in the dirt."

"What does he do? How does he spend his time?"

"Why he does nothing but read; it is books when he gets up, books all day and books at night; he knows every book on the plantation by heart." The Doctor was greatly relieved, and the sight of the old father, so grief stricken about the studious habits of the boy William, caused him to break into a hearty laugh.

"Is that all?" he exclaimed. "It may be that the Lord has made him that way sure enough; there are many things for people to do besides work on the farm and, while I am sorry that he has such an aversion to it, I am glad to know that he is not rebellious nor wicked nor hard to manage. Give him an education and that will be worth more to him than $20,000."

A new day dawned for William. Not long after the conversation at the fence he was sent to a classical school in the neighborhood which to his imagination suggested a paradise. He said that one reason why he liked to talk to the owner of the mill was because he knew so many things. It was startling to note the hunger and respect that William had for knowledge. He thought that the world was filled with wonderful things to be known and he longed to know them.

> "The wish to know—that endless thirst
> Still urged me onward with desire
> Insatiate to explore, to inquire."

He had a poor opinion of the boy that rattled away with foolish talk, but he liked a boy who would "talk sense."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL DAYS AND CONVERSION. TEACHING SCHOOL. DECISION TO PREACH

1848–1854

It was a mountain-top day for him when he walked off that first morning to school. The teacher's name was Mr. E. W. Horseley, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. Every afternoon while returning home from school William would study his lessons for the next day, often stopping on the way for that purpose, and frequently knowing half his lessons upon his arrival at home. Every morning he would be waked up by his father two hours before day and there before the blazing light of a big fire he would tug and toil over his lessons. Missing a lesson filled him with shame; but the approval of his father, he said, was more to him than medals of gold. He knew that he had wounded the old man by his reluctance to working on the farm and it was his delight now to bring him pleasure by doing well in his classes. His teacher filled him with a love for Latin and before he left school he did not lack much of being able to repeat the Latin Grammar bodily from beginning to end.

"William" said an old gentleman in the neighborhood to him one day "I wish that my boys loved to go to school as much as you do."

William said that it had not occurred to him that his affection for his school had anything noteworthy in it but the gentleman's remark brought him to realize that he did indeed love his school. But he had a craving for something else besides knowledge; he had a craving for religion. When a very small boy at the old Mount Hermon church something took

Digitized by Google

place that seemed to touch the deepest chords in his soul. A revival was in progress and he was sitting back in the crowd watching the proceedings with curious gaze when suddenly he saw his sister come down the aisle to his cousin Henry,—"a biggish, rough boy"—and in a most tender manner invite him to go with her to the front seat. Henry, with his streaming tears, went and little William saw it all and knew that religion was at the bottom of it and he thought that religion was the biggest thing in the world, and that he wanted it too, but he understood almost nothing about it. The news went forth that Henry was converted, and William felt that he too would like to be converted but it seemed a thing impossible. He was only ten years old and so he locked up these timid desires in his heart and kept on his narrow little pathway.

Several years had now passed since the Mount Hermon meetings and he had become a school boy, but the yearning for "religion" had never entirely left him.

One day he heard news that gave him a fluttering of heart. He was told that meetings were soon to commence at Mount Hermon. He felt that he would give all that he had if he could only become converted, but there seemed no hope for a timid, ignorant lad like him. He kept on at school, but every day both going and coming, he would turn aside from the road, and between the crooked roots of a big oak tree he would bow himself down and tell God about his troubles.

On Friday afternoon he ran home as if the house was afire and that night after supper he went to Mount Hermon,—went alone—two miles of the journey being through an unbroken forest. The preachers, the crowd of people, the thrilling songs and the sinners pressing to the front bench held his attention; but he sat helpless,—when to his amazement a fine old gentleman, Dr. Falls, came down the aisle to him and in a singularly kind manner invited him to go with him to the front. William went and was surprised at his coolness when he reached the front bench. No light came into his soul and much discouraged he wended his long and lonely way back to his home. He went

Digitized by Google

the next day, but nothing occured to bring him comfort and he faced the prospect of another solitary tramp homewards that evening, but his venerable friend Dr. Falls who lived near the church said to him: "William, come home with me to supper." That invitation meant much for William. It meant his return to the church that night. He went. The party at Dr. Falls' home that evening, however, was too gay for the boy to linger there and he started to church soon after supper, the moon lighting his path across the field. On his way he heard footsteps behind him and was overtaken by a kinsman, Mr. Munroe Hatcher, who opened up the subject of religion to him. The boy listened and answered his questions in trembling fashion. The man, who himself had been recently converted after a notoriously wicked life, sought to explain to William what it meant to believe in Christ " I have heard people talk about having faith, but I don't believe I can understand it" William said almost in a tone of despair. Suddenly the man stopped in the road and, looking towards the sky, he pointed his finger upwards and said: "Do you see that limb up yonder?" The troubled boy lifted his gaze and there, far above him, he saw the limb of a giant oak stretching itself across the road. How high it seemed to William's eyes!

"Suppose you were on that limb; you would be afraid to jump off, would'nt you?"

The boy shuddered as he thought of it and said:

"Yes, indeed."

"Look again" he said. "Suppose you were on that limb and I were to call to you and tell you to jump off that I would catch you; would you jump?"

"No, indeed" said William very decidedly.

"But, why not? If I were to promise you that I would certainly catch you and that you would not be hurt, why wouldn't you jump?"

"Because I would'nt think you would have the strength to catch me."

"Ah, that is it exactly" he replied "You would not believe

Digitized by Google

that I could do it. That is unbelief. You would lack faith in me."

There flashed into William's mind a faint idea of what it meant to doubt Christ, and he felt a little guilty for seeming to doubt Christ.

"But look at that limb again" he said with a new vigor in his tone. "Suppose now that you were on that limb—look up at it."

Once more the boy turned his heavy anxious eyes towards the limb and it seemed to tower higher than ever.

"Suppose you were up there and Jesus Christ was to come right here and you should know that it was he and he should lift both his hands towards you and should call to you 'William, let go the limb and fall and I will catch you,' would you do it?"

How the question stirred his soul. He did not make quick reply. He faced fully the question: "Would I let go if Christ were to tell me he would catch me." As he thought of Christ the Son of God making him such an offer he felt with all his heart that he would let go. He knew that he would. He even began to wish that he was up on the limb and could show Christ that he would, and so he answered in glad tone.

"Yes, I would."
"Why would you?" the friend asked.
"Because if he should say he would catch me I believe that he would."
"In other words, you would have faith in him" the old man eagerly replied.

Slowly the light began to break into the boy's mind. The old man went on to tell him that he would let go the limb because he had faith in Christ, and "so Christ says you must let go your sins and all your earthly hopes for salvation, and fall into his arms and he will catch you and save you." We need not protract the story except to say that William went

Digitized by Google

into the church and resolved that he would not leave the building until he settled the question as to whether he would trust himself to Christ to save him; and right there that night he settled it. He saw his brother Henry sitting in another part of the church and he pushed his way over to him, squeezed into the bench by him, put his hand on his shoulder and leaning as far up towards his ear as he could get, whispered: "Brother Henry, I can trust the Savior." It was late that night when Henry and William reached home; the house had long been wrapped in slumber, but Henry tip-toed into the old father's room went to his bed, gently awoke him and said:

"Father, great news tonight; your baby boy came into the kingdom of God."

A day or so later, the father said to him: "My Son, if you are thinking of joining the church I suggest that you read your New Testament before taking any public step."

William had always declared that he expected to be a Presbyterian in memory of his mother who was a Presbyterian. His kins-people on his father's side were Baptists. He went to the New Testament and one day he announced that he had decided to be baptized and join the Baptist Church. A few days later, as the multitude gathered at the beautiful Otter Creek, and as old Father Harris led the candidates down into the water, one of that happy number was William. He attended some cottage prayer meetings and to his over-mastering delight his words to an unsaved young man led him to Christ. It was his first taste of soul winning and a fire was then kindled in his heart that never went out.

He now faced a crisis. He had completed his course in the neighborhood schools, was seventeen years of age, and was prepared by his studies to enter College—but alas, his father had not the means to send him. He determined to earn the money and at the age of seventeen he went to the home of his married sister at the foot of the Peaks of Otter to teach school.

He thus writes:

"My brother Henry went with me; we traveled on horseback

Digitized by Google

carrying my little stock of goods in very ordinary saddle bags. I am sure I did not carry as much as two dollars with me and although I was then seventeen years and four months old I do not believe that I had had as much as five dollars in all my life put together. I had suffered greviously during the past summer with eczema and it troubled me all the winter long. During that winter I occupied a little log cabin in the yard and did quite an amount of reading,—though as a fact, I had nothing to read by in the way of light except fire light, lightwood not being found in that neighborhood."

In addition to his regular school he organized what he called a "School of Manners" in which he taught his pupils "how to enter a parlor," "how to sit in a chair," "how to use the knife and fork in eating" and other such feats of social skill. He became keenly interested also in a community Debating Society, and here he probably had his first experience in grappling with others in debate.

But this young teacher had a trouble within his own breast that his pupils knew not of. A question was knocking at his soul for an answer—the question as to whether he ought to enter the Gospel ministry. He had as a boy seemed very positive that God did not intend for him to be a farmer. His mother's dying prayer was that he should be a preacher; old Father Harris had startled him one day with the same suggestion, and in other ways the subject had gained his attention. The question had been disturbing him so long and was now so persistent in its appeal that one night—misty and dismal though it was—he put on his hat and went out into the darkness and pushed his way up a near-by hill determined that he would remain on the hill until the question was settled. There, under a cherry tree, the dying prayer of her whose dust was sleeping under another cherry tree was answered and her boy there decided to devote himself to the gospel ministry.

His decision to preach, however, did not fling him precipitately into the active ministry. Between him and his chosen life's work there stood the College, and between him and the

Digitized by Google

College were several hundred dollars which he must earn; and so when his little school closed he moved around to the other side of the mountain where he was engaged to teach another school for the next twelve months. At this time he wore a glove on his crippled hand. At the end of the session he returned to his home with his earnings,—which were not sufficient, however, to unlock the College gate. Although his soul cried out for the high education, he turned once more to teaching in order to increase his financial store. He undertook a private school in Montgomery County, writing at the same time a letter of inquiry to Dr. Ryland, President of Richmond College, regarding the College; but the passing weeks brought him no reply.

In the meantime something happened in his school. He was compelled to whip one of his obstreporous pupils and that night the big father lunged into William's room and demanded an explanation. William told him that the proper discipline of the school required the whipping and then informed the fuming parent that if he was dissatisfied he could settle with him and their relations would cease. The suggestion was accepted and thereupon William packed up and departed, sleeping that night at a neighbor's.

Next morning he stopped at the Post Office on his way to the depot, and was handed a letter which proved to be from Dr. Ryland. The letter said in substance, "Come on to Richmond College."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

FOUR YEARS AT RICHMOND COLLEGE

1854–1858

Upon his arrival at home he was greeted by the news that his brother Harvey had also decided to enter the ministry and soon it was agreed that William should divide his funds with Harvey and that together they should enter Richmond College.

A happy day was that for William. For twenty years he had been a country youth and had played his little part within the circle of the mountains. But now the portal swings open and he is to enter the great world outside. His passion for knowledge,—so rampant and aggressive—is at last to be rewarded and he is to become a student in a great institution and a comrade with ambitious, brilliant young men.

As William and his brother were speeding along on the train that was taking them to the College at Richmond William said:

"Harvey, my feeling of greenness and outlandishness, as I think of the College, is overwhelming and I know we will cut a sorry figure before those brilliant, highly advanced students."

"I expect you are right, William."

"I know we will furnish them amusement and be the target for their jokes" continued William "but I do have one wish and that is that we will not be the worst of the lot."

"Vain wish" Harvey replied laughing.

"I think" continued William "that if we can only find just one student who is unquestionably a bigger fool than we are I will rest easier."

"You are becoming scared too soon. I am not troubled.

Digitized by Google

Those fellows do not worry me, and what care I for their polish and their big learning. They have had their chance and we have'nt. They will have to take us at what we are," and Harvey grew defiant as he spoke.

But defiance did not suit William's mood at that moment. He finally said:

"Harvey."

"What is it?"

"If the fool killer does come around the College after we get there, it will go a long way towards reconciling me to my dreadful fate if I can only witness the execution of one fool greater than I am, before my time comes."

At sunset these two mountain boys alighted at the depot in Richmond, and engaged the driver of a street wagon to carry them and their trunks to the College for twenty-five cents apiece. Each one sat upon his trunk in the wagon and in such state and pomp they drove in upon the College campus.

"A somewhat oldish student" spying these two country youths took them in hand at once, showed them where they could get their supper, found a room where they could sleep and all the while kept talking to them in quite a knowing and fatherly way. William was overwhelmed with gratitude and said to others afterwards that he loved the fellow on the spot. But that night after William and Harvey had gone to bed William said softly:

"Harvey."

"What is it?" mumbled the older brother.

"I solemnly believe that if the fool killer comes along to-night that you and I will have two chances to one so far as our kind benefactor who took us in hand on our arrival this evening is concerned." William's jest about his greenness had in it no mock modesty. His own stock of learning seemed to him so small that he thought that if he could hold his tongue he would at least not make a fool of himself with the students. He expected to be thrilled by the fine talk of bright pupils. His thirst was for knowledge. There were great books to be

Digitized by Google

studied; great teachers from whom he could learn and gifted students with whom he could associate, and that constituted the glory of the College for him.

He and Harvey on Sunday received company and William said they were wild with conceit to find how well they were being considered by the students. He said that he felt dwarfed by the superior genius of some of the young men in College that year, and they taught him "that there was a long chasm between mediocrity and genius."

His capacity for friendship manifested itself during this first session, his soul becoming knit to that of a student named Charles H. Ryland and the union thus formed continued unbroken to the end of life.

There was another student there with whom he formed a life long friendship. He was a simple-hearted, unpretentious, country youth, but at their first meeting William knew that he would like him and at every meeting the liking grew, grew solidly and rapidly. And though William was slow in letting down the bars, yet they were gradually all taken down and it came to pass that a second friendship was formed—this time with John R. Bagby, which proved in some respects to be the strongest, most lasting and most affectionate of his life. He was discriminating in his estimate of his College mates. There was one student, who afterwards became a distinguished minister, who seemed to excite William's aversion and indignation to whom he said: "I do not like your actions, or your manners; they are offensive to me."

Even regarding one of the high officials of the College whom he respected he said: "If I had superintended the making of the old gentleman I would have omitted several things." William's decision of character expressed itself strongly in his likes and dislikes. He said in later years to the venerable official that in his student days he admired him and reverenced him but that there were times when his admiration was not in working order.

If he did not like a thing his instinct for improvement would

Digitized by Google

spring into action. There was a Literary Society in the College which he joined but he soon found himself discontented. It lacked snap and force and he said so, and he and Charley Ryland and W. S. Penick decided that conditions would be bettered by the organization of another Society. They thought that the two would stimulate each other and a higher standard of excellence be maintained. Accordingly the three young men decided to launch the new organization at the opening of the second session.

This was done, young Ryland suggesting its name,—"Philologian" and William suggesting W. S. Penick as its first president. "I think" "said Charles Ryland referring to the new Society, "that more than any other single person he [William E. Hatcher] shaped its early life and gave it popularity in the College."

The following letter was written recently by a lady who was a student in those days in the Richmond Female Institute. She thus describes the young Bedford student, Mr. William Hatcher:

"He said of himself in his inimitable style that he started to College as a verdant country youth fearing the fool killer would seize him before he reached Richmond. But the faculty welcomed him as a lad of unusual promise. They placed him in the front rank and kept him on the roll of honor during his College career. Like many freshmen he took the role of cynic and woman hater. Perhaps he thought he could pursue his studies better under this guise. He was handsome and witty, so that "the girls" of that period who are the grandmothers and great grandmothers of today—or, of yesterday—were anxious to make his acquaintance. But he resolutely declined all invitations and always expressed his contempt for the fair sex when as college orator he had an opportunity to express his views. He declared that he could forgive their ignorance of literature if they knew anything of domestic science; but that while they read nothing more uplifting than Godey's Lady's book, they marveled how the apples ever got into the dumplings. I do not use quotation marks because his

Digitized by Google

language was better than my memory. These remarks were listened to by the senior class of the Richmond Female Institute, young ladies whose professors were proud of their way of reciting Butler's Analogy, Virgil, and Mathematics. Of course they yearned for revenge."

He heard that a young pastor from Baltimore, Rev. George B. Taylor, would deliver an alumni address before the College. The thought of a young minister speaking under such conditions fired his imagination and kindled his desire to hear him. He heard him,—the subject of the address being 'The Thinker."

He afterwards wrote; "I did not meet the alumni orator on the occasion but I saw men and women shaking hands with him in a pleased way, and I knew that he hit the nail on the head. I joined the student gang as they plodded out and despaired of ever doing anything like that."

He himself made a striking address in July 1856. It was before the Grace Street Baptist Sunday School in Richmond where he had been invited to make a fourth of July speech. The manuscript has been found among his papers and was written with scrupulous neatness. The sheets are sewed together and enclosed within a blue wrapper, on the back of which are written—or rather pen printed with ornamental border,—the words:

"Delivered before the

"Grace Street Sabbath School

"July 4th 1856

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

Not a word is erased nor a line altered in the manuscript, and its whole appearance shows that it is the final product of much preparation. Even at this early period he had begun the practice of careful rewritings of his public discourses. His

Digitized by Google

address predicts the coming war between the North and the South. He chose as his subject, "The influence of Politics upon the country's youth", and among other things he said: "Present conditions indicate the overthrow of our country. It seems that our nation wishes to exhaust the vitality of the Union by bleeding her at every vein by party weapons and by tearing her asunder . . ." He then tells them that he speaks not as a Southerner to justify the South but "to exhort the South to show a spirit of tolerance and patience befitting the solemn position which we occupy." Civil War would be worse, he declared, than foreign war with England.

"Let England come. She can not inflict upon us half the mischief that must result from Civil war. . . . Civil War in the Union!!! Oh my countrymen and my God! . . . .

"I never gaze into the calm eye of a promising boy without sighing: 'How like lambs for the slaughter'. . . . .

"Little boys, don't be politicians. . . . Your country calls you to be patriots. Your God calls you to be christians."

In his first efforts at preaching, however, William had much to discourage him. He had had no homiletical instruction. His first attempt seems to have been made during his vacation in Bedford and after his first year in College. He went over to a nearby house where a young man was holding a series of meetings. The preacher laid hold of him and put him up for a sermon. After the performance, as William was walking away in the dark, he heard an old fellow say to some one "I dun got a fa'r night's sleep while that feller was talkin' " The remark sent him on his way in a crumpled and shattered condition. A stinging blow of that nature always withered him. Some young men could make ludicrous spectacles of themselves and suffer collapse and yet shake it off with a laugh, but not so with William. He fought hard to avoid such disasters but when they came it was not in his nature to make light of them.

It is true that we have no record of these early failures

Digitized by Google

except the recitals of his own pen and his failures may have seemed greater to him than to others. He related that the president of the College used to send the young ministerial students to preach at one of the Colored Baptist churches of the city. Some said he sent them that they might practice on the colored hearers. "He sent me once" said William "and the way in which I tried the people effectually cut me off from any further practice on my part."

He was given another opportunity at a Mission and he said: "My text and I had a misunderstanding at the start and were never on speaking terms afterwards." It was during his second summer vacation that a kind hearted old kinsman at whose house he was visiting said: "William I want you to stay over Sunday and preach and let me see what you can do." William did not fancy the mode of invitation for he did not feel that he had any preaching wares to be putting on exhibition but he preached. "It was forty years" he said "before I was invited to that pulpit again."

But the tide soon turned. During this same Summer a message came to him one day from old Father Harris telling him that a meeting was to begin at Suck Spring Church on the next Sunday and as the old pastor could not be present on the opening day, he asked William to preach for him. With a fluttering of heart he consented and set about his preparation. He said: "I conned over my text, walked it in the woods, combed out the tangles of my thoughts, went on my knees about it and then with many dreads and with enough awkwardness to enliven a circus I went to the appointment." He preached from the text: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" and he said that as he preached, the fires in his own heart seemed to kindle; his text opened before him with a new and heavenly richness and his soul feasted and reveled in it as he gave it out to his hearers.

As he was jogging homewards after the service an old gentle-

Digitized by Google

man, a deacon of the church, stately and dignified rode up beside him in the road and said:

"I must have you for dinner today" and then later on he said—and William noticed that the old gentleman's voice choked as he spoke:

"How I wish my boys could have gotten into the church today and could have heard you. I think they could not have resisted it."

His words fell like music upon the young preachers ears. Nothing like it had he ever heard before. But another surprise awaited him. A second gentleman soon joined them, in their ride,—William's old teacher.

"Who is to conduct these meetings?" the teacher asked but the other did not seem to know. Whereupon the teacher who was a Methodist, said: "If you could get this boy, my old school boy, to do the preaching and he would tell that story as he told it today we would have a great revival." It is not known what "that story" was which so impressed the old teacher but it was this plan of telling one great story in a sermon that took root in his ministry and bore rich fruit in his subsequent life.

On Tuesday morning, to his overwhelming surprise, he received a request from the old pastor that he would come back to Suck Spring Church and help him in the meetings. He responded to the request and preached day by day in meetings that became memorable in that section of the country. "It was as sweet as the grapes of eschol" he said "it had in it the very wines of the celestial kingdom and put a new light on life and a new peace in my heart."

The following narrative of an incident that occured in the meetings shows his habit of taking note of ludicrous situations in the midst of solemn surroundings.

"It rained one night" he said "shutting in a restless hound. At the close of my sermon I called on a brother to make a special prayer. It was a brother who had a voice sepulchral in his depths and mountainous in its elevations. He began

Digitized by Google

under ground, resembling somewhat a bumble bee in a barrel, or the solemn rumble of a wind in a cellar. Every sentence gave new strength and swell to his voice until there was some solicitude felt about the roof. Not long after he began his prayer I, who was kneeling in the pulpit, heard a most piteous and piercing whine behind me. For a time I felt entirely too devout to investigate the trouble but I found that every time the praying brother climbed a new note higher in his prayer this dismal noise behind me and right at my feet also grew in strength until I felt constrained to look around.

"It was the immense hound and the extraordinary vocal exercises which were going on at the foot of the pulpit steps were evidently getting upon his nerves. The prayer was affecting the hound very seriously and I made a sort of calculation based on my acquaintance with the ascending scale of Brother Lee's vocal power in prayer with the result that I concluded that if the dog rose in his vocal excitement correspondingly with the brother that the church would hear a mountain howl that would be most unfriendly to our revival."

His ability to see humorous features that might be lurking about an incident appeared in one of his visits to hear Dr. Jeter preach at Grace Street Church. Doctor Jeter was comparing the glory of the christian to the distinctions of earth and William thus writes regarding the sermon:

"He was in the preaching humor and was towering in his passionate eloquence. Rising to the climax and with his voice at the highest pitch he exclaimed:

" 'I would rather be a christian than to have the wealth of the Rothchilds; I would rather be a christian than to be the president of these United States; I would rather be a christian than to wear the crown of England and—I would rather be a christian (here he was very high) than to—than to be (here he began to shake and fall) rather be a christian I say,—than than to be—than I say to be—*Julius Caesar*.'

"Why he lugged in the tyrannical Caesar at this point I never knew. He may have thought that he would meet the exigencies of the case inasmuch as the imperial Caesar is reputed to be useful in stopping a crack to keep the wind away. I suspected that he brought in the blood-thirsty old Roman in a spirit of vexation and as a curt way of expressing contempt for himself."

Digitized by Google

His passion for souls that had been kindled in his Suck Spring meetings burned within him at College. He set his heart upon having a great revival of religion among the students and it was characteristic of him that when once he had set for himself a high task his soul would flame with the purpose to accomplish it. His prayers and efforts were rewarded and a revival broke out among the students. Meetings were held every day "and nearly every student was brought to Christ" says Rev. W. J. Shipman, one of the students. "He (William E. Hatcher) was the prime mover in this revival and through his efforts it was kept up. He was the leader and he was the one who led Joe Turner to the Saviour. William E. Hatcher was prominent in every religious movement in the College while he was there." The meetings wrought a spiritual upheaval in the College. "They produced a remarkable effect upon College life" said Dr. Ryland and in later years William writes: "The memories of that revival would fill a book and rarely do they ever come back without opening the fountains of my soul."

One Wednesday night he attended a prayer meeting at the Grace Street church and his little trip brought to him a new and life-long friend. He writes regarding Rev. Geo. B. Taylor:

"Just before my graduation I was one night at the Grace Street Church prayer meeting and found this young minister present with his bride, they being then on a visit to his parents. How modestly proud he was as he presented that fair treasure of his soul to his old church friends and was met with joyous congratulations on every side. It is a choice memory to me that in some way he singled me out and said a few words not a bit patronizing, but so simple and offhand that it marked an epoch in my life. I went out with a new glow in me—a feeling of comradeship with men as the possible thing to come."

Rev. W. J. Shipman says in a letter concerning William E. Hatcher that he "was considered a student of superior intellect." Dr. Willingham who knew him later in life said "he had the brightest mind of any man I ever knew."

Digitized by Google

"Rev. Wm. E. Hatcher's course at Richmond College (says the Herald quoting from "The True Index") was a brilliant one, closing with a graduating address which electrified the audience and sent many of them home with the sage reflection "That young man will make his mark."

This reference to his graduating address brings us to the end of his College career. "When he made his graduating address at the Commencement" writes Dr. Pilcher "he captured the audience as no other graduate had done and stepped into enviable prominence." The subject of his address was "The Graduate." He emerged from College with his field of labor already chosen. He had accepted a call from the Baptist Church in Manchester—a town on the other side of the river. Against this shabby town he had picked up a violent prejudice. In describing his feelings about the place before he had even thought of going there he said: "When I was in a mood to make bad wishes against anybody I wished that they might have to live in Manchester."

After the College Commencement he spent a month with his father at the home in Bedford. The father was then in his 76th year. William writes:

"We were much together and yet, blame me if you will, not a word passed about my pastorate and not a word as to his religious belief or his mental attitude towards the scriptures. At times I had twinges of self reproach and felt a wondering sense of responsibility; but somehow I could not get my lips to frame the words."

Such reluctance to speaking to other members of the family about their religious condition seems to have been a Hatcher trait. Dr. Jeter said that his mother—who was a sister of William's father,—never spoke to him about being a christian and yet he said he always felt that she was praying for him. William bade his father and family good bye, closed his Bedford visit and hurried to Manchester, there to begin his career as pastor.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

FIRST YEAR OF MANCHESTER PASTORATE

1858–1861

The town of Manchester seemed like a blot upon the map; and, as for the church, it lacked almost everything except a big indebtedness.

The church building was only partially completed. $7,000 worth of work had been done upon it, but only $1,500 had been raised to pay for this work. In addition to this, the church membership was demoralized and scattered.

How came this popular young minister to link himself with such a "forlorn hope"? The President of the College thought he had committed a blunder.

"The awe inspiring president of the College ripped me up without mercy for accepting the call, assured me that the worst disasters were ahead of me and distinctly hinted to me that my greatness consisted in my folly. Not even his relentless upbraidings awoke in me one doubt as to my duty to take up my work in Manchester."

With this conviction he entered upon his pastorate. It was only a basement room in which his church could meet and work and there on the first Sunday in August 1858 he preached his first sermon,—preached it, as he said, "to a lot of well behaved empty benches". The sight of the little woe-be-gone handful at his first service sent a chill through his soul. The next Sunday was like unto the first,—and his efforts seemed a mockery. He was young, had never had a

Digitized by Google

church before and knew next to nothing about pastoral work. He realized that he had a crisis on his hands and he said he felt that nothing but a miracle could save the day.

"That week I took myself out for a private interview" he said "and myself and I went over the situation and agreed that it was grim and that my incompetence was grimmer. We finally got together—that is, I and myself—and passed one resolution to the effect that we would go in with both hands and both feet, with heart and soul, day and night, praying all the time and would work one solid year though it should be on empty benches, though there was not a conversion, not a visible tear, not a sign nor symptom of interest or progress during all that time."

Friday night was the time for his weekly prayer meeting and when he entered the room he was surprised to find such a goodly attendance and during the service,—Oh, wonder of wonders—a young woman was converted,—gloriously converted while he was speaking. He read the fact at once in her radiant face and streaming tears. It melted all hearts but it was merely the beginning. On Sunday the pastor preached with a new fervor, and others came forward to tell of their faith in Christ. A revival sprang up that stirred his church and the town, meetings were held night by night and the membership grew from 35 to more than a hundred.

He next turned his attention to the $5,500 debt resting upon the church and in a rapid, aggressive campaign he raised the entire amount.

The auditorium of the church was still unfinished and another campaign, therefore, was set on foot and in a short while the building was completed and pastor and people moved up into their new and larger church quarters.

After these months of strain he hurried away to his beloved Bedford,—in the midst of winter. He felt that he ought to speak to his old father about his soul and about his preparation for the other world, for up to this time never a word to the old man about his religious condition had ever passed his lips.

Digitized by Google

He went and precious days he had with his father, but the last day had come and the one subject above all others had not been mentioned in any of their conversations. The rest of the story is told by William.:

"I felt so much the pain of the long drawn out silence between us. I was to leave early one morning; it was mid-winter, and the weather was rough, and the station was fully eight miles away, and my father shocked the family by announcing that he would take me to the station. It did not seem to be a prudent thing, for by this time he was in his seventy-sixth year and walked with a weakening step. But he had a will and a way of his own which, while rugged and decided, was not stormy nor harsh—only, when he said it all interrogation points were taken down, and the thing was settled.

"I recall the morning that we moved out along the old lane, and how unusually sober and taciturn he seemed to be; but after we turned into the main road, he said:

" 'I was anxious to come with you because I have something to say to you.'

"He told me then, with no sign of fear, but with some tender symptoms of emotional sorrow, that he felt that his strength was fast going and that I seemed so set upon my work that he really doubted whether he would ever see me again, and that he did not want a final separation until he had made a statement.

" 'I have never talked with you, my son,' he said, very soberly, 'about my own religious outlook. Perhaps you have thought it strange that I did not, but felt that I ought to have trusted you more.'

" 'No, father,' I said, 'there has been a fellowship between us. I cannot say that I know the secrets of your heart, but in some way I have had an abounding faith in you. I have sometimes chided myself that I did not talk with you, but I always justified myself by the thought that you knew me, and I knew you.'

"He seemed delighted. He brightened up gloriously, and seemed to feel that he was put on a better footing, and then his long voiceless faith told its story. He said that in the long, far back past he was stricken with conviction, felt the need of a Saviour's mercy, and that while out in the farm where his servants were working he found his trust in God, and was made

Digitized by Google

to rejoice in the hope of eternal life. He spoke of it as a distinct, decisive, and unquestionable experience, and from that dated his christian life. He said that at first he was so startled and so stricken with a sense of weakness that he did not tell it, and that silence became the mood of his new experience. He told me also that at the time he much desired to go into the church, but that there was a grievous feud raging in the church at the time, and he felt that it would not help him spiritually to get into the atmosphere of the wrangling. I could but respect him for shrinking away from such an unhealthy church atmosphere, and in my later life I have had occasion to question whether it was desirable that a young christian should be flung into the hostile winds of a church strife. I know that my heart filled with unutterable sympathy for the loneliness of his christian life, filled with a feeling that it was better to be shut out than shut in with a church life that could not nourish and protect him.

"I can hardly recall the things that were said at that point in our conversation, but I do know that in that morning ride we found God's time for our talk. I had intended to speak to him that morning, had my heart fully set upon doing so, but it was far better for him to take the initiative part, and it was the blessing of my life time to hear him with such brief, common words, and with such rising ardors tell of the peace which he had had in God, of the joy that he had had in prayer, and of the sustaining hope that then filled him, and of his readiness to go hence whenever his Saviour beckoned him to come. It was plain, old-time religious talk, straight out of his heart, broken a little by emotion and maybe with some of its grammar not in its best form; but it was a testimony that has been part of the heritage of this world to me. It was a light that broke out at eventide for him and for me in the freshness of the morning.

"'But there is one thing I ought to tell you,' he said, 'and that is that in reviewing my religious course, I am not satisfied. I never lost my faith, I never lost my peace, but I lost much by not coming out. I lost baptism, I lost fellowship with the good people in the church. I lost my christian influence, and I feel deeply and will probably feel forever that I lost much in the other world by not doing better in this.'

"The sun glowed with a heaven born luster on the Bedford hills as we had that memorable, that delicious conversation. It put songs in my soul, and while I saw the moisture on his eyelids when he shook hands and I bounded on the train, I

Digitized by Google

went my way rejoicing. I had what I had longed for. My father had spoken, and I was satisfied. Only three brief months fled away, and the tidings, too slow in coming, reached me that the end had come, and I saw him no more."

Two great religious gatherings were held in Richmond during May and June. The first was the Southern Baptist Convention composed of representative Baptist ministers and laymen from all the Southern states. He had never looked upon this large body. He thus describes his first sight of the distinguished Dr. Richard Fuller. It occurred on the opening night of the Convention.

"I found myself on that lower platform fearfully jammed up against a rugged old gentleman with a touseled head, obstrusive features and an eye of diamond splendor and my distinct impression was that he was a well-to-do cattle merchant from the mountains. So far as my position would allow I listened with interest to several becoming little speeches setting forth the claims of Dr. Richard Fuller of Baltimore for the presidency. At once I favored his election for it would enable me to see him—he at that time being the most eminent pulpit orator in the South. He was chosen without opposition and my surprise can be imagined when I say that when they summoned the Doctor to the platform to assume the gavel, my oppressive mountaineer, who was fast exhausting my breath, turned out to be the veritable Dr. Fuller. I had private as well as public reasons for rejoicing in his election."

In the next month occurred the gathering of the Virginia Baptists in their General Association. This body met in the city of Richmond and one day during its sessions the youthful pastor from Manchester was called to the front to tell of the wonderful blessings that had come upon his church.

The person who influenced him most largely was Dr. J. B. Jeter. During the summer he labored with the Doctor in revival meetings. This aged minister was of noble, commanding personality with high mental and spiritual gifts and his young cousin seemed to imbibe much of the best that was in the old man. But this did not obscure William's

Digitized by Google

sense of the ludicrous—even in the revival meetings. The meetings were in Amelia county. He said:

"Almost every morning Dr. Jeter, when looking over his manuscripts and selecting his sermon for the day, would refer rather complacently to his sermon on "The Brazen Serpent." It was evidently one of his favorites. It had done valuable execution in his Masters service elsewhere and he was fond of preaching it. He spoke of it to me so often that I said to him more than once: "Bring him out; give us your 'Brazen Serpent' today." But he did not do so. He saved that for his last, and as I had never heard it I supposed it would be his best. But it proved an unlucky day for the brazen serpent. The Doctor did not break down but his manner was painfully stilted and his delivery frigid and feeble. Apparently the sermon produced no effect. I was a little slow in getting out to the dinner table in the yard and when I reached there I found him already on hand and devouring his dinner with a gusto in no degree abated by the disaster of the morning. He met me as I walked up and with a grim and comical twinkle in his eye said: 'Well after all my brazen serpent proved a flash in the pan.'

"As I was booked for a sermon that afternoon and was very anxious to put him in as a substitute I was bold enough to say to him:

" 'I admit that the Brazen Serpent did not go well but you ought to preach again before leaving the community and I want you to preach this afternoon.'

" 'Ah; I may go from bad to worse' he said in melancholy tone and yet with the smile not yet faded from his face and then after a little reflection he ventured:

" 'Well I will take a turn in the bushes and will see if I can beat up another sermon.'

"He preached that afternoon on 'The Woman that was a sinner' and it was a sermon of irresistible power."

It was during this same Summer that there awoke within him an aspiration to use his pen for the public press and the public benefit. It came about in this way. Rev. George B. Taylor, who has already been referred to in these pages as having twice crossed the path of the youthful William—each time with happy effect—, was at this time pastor of the Staunton Baptist Church and invited his friend William E. Hatcher to

Digitized by Google

aid him in meetings at his church. Mr. Hatcher went and writes concerning his delightful visit. His words may well be studied for they indicate some of the ideals that were then forming in his soul. Regarding Mr. Taylor's invitation he writes:

"With ill-concealed rapture I accepted the call and in due season I went. As I look back and measure the motive of my going I have to say that my longing for companionship with him played no small part. I felt that there was a rich treasure in him for me. He knew so much that I knew not and knew it in such a way as I was eager to learn. . . . He stirred me by his luminous talk about books. Then, too, he was growing fast as a writer and by my contact with him, rather than by any words of his, I found myself inflamed with a new ambition to put my pen to use in a literary and religious way. . . . How my soul reveled in him! He put a storm of new thoughts flowing over my head and heart and the influence of it never went out."

The most significant words in the above communication are those referring to his ambition to use his pen for the public service. It is not his love of writing to which he refers for that literary aspiration seems to have been in him from childhood. "The love of composition" says he "was inherent in me and the thought that I might see at some time some production from my pen burned as a flame in my soul in my youthful days." Such a desire has glowed in many a soul. Byron writes in playful fashion:

"Tis pleasant sure to see one's name in print.
A book's a book although there's nothing in it."

Mr. Hatcher naturally loved to build up sentences. "We have great respect" he writes "for the man who writes from a genuine passion for composition." His Staunton visit seemed to awake in him an ambition to use his pen for higher purposes than his own gratification. He resolved to use it—as he expresses it—"in a literary and religious way". Henceforth

Digitized by Google

his pen was destined to become an instrument of cheer and blessing to thousands and thousands of readers.

He had had no home of his own up to this time but the coming of his widowed sister with her happy hearted daughter linked them together in a house keeping arrangement that provided a home for the three under very delightful conditions.

But the young pastor had a task that sorely tested his leadership. His church membership, instead of being a homogeneous body, was a conglomeration.

"Our choir leader was turned out for habitual cruelty to his wife. Our clerk was found to be spending many of his nights at the card table. Our senior deacon who collected the money for my salary had his drunken sprees much more regularly than he paid me my salary and the most prominent woman of the church had almost infinite genius for breeding disorders."

It was not long, however, before the Baptist Church resembled a bee hive in activity. Every night the lights burned brightly in the building and the young pastor was on hand with some sacred device for attracting the young people, satisfying their social aspirations, disciplining them in Bible study and enlisting them in Christian service.

He taught a Singing Class on Thursday nights and on Sundays he was the choir leader as well as the preacher. His friend, John R. Bagby, still a student at the College, and himself a musician would come over and help him with his music and together they would often take up a new song book and sing it through at one time. A Debating Society among his young people was organized which became quite famous in the town and which received frequent notice in the Richmond papers. As for the devotion of the members, a lady writes: "A number of them seldom drew their pay on Saturday night that they did not buy something to send to their pastor."

But already one of the most powerful forces within his soul had begun to manifest itself,—*his love for boys.* All

Digitized by Google

classes of people gained his interest and for them he would make sacrifices, but he would go the farthest length for boys,—especially those whose lot was narrow and lonely. He had them in his home, in his study, in his walks. Often he would have them spend a night, or a week,—sometimes to stay indefinitely, as in the case of Harvey Nunnally and others. Dr. C. V. Waugh, of Florida, now an honored minister, was one of these boys and he writes:

"No mortal can ever know what he was to me. . . . I love him next to my own dear mother. He showed me my life's work and helped me in so many ways to get ready for it. . . . As long as I live I shall incarnate him in me all I can."

The sight of a boy touched the deepest springs of his sympathy. Why was this? He writes:

"Possibly it was the hardships of my boyhood, my loneliness without a mother, my bothers about an education, the perplexities of my religious struggles and withal some heavenly suggestion unheard but powerfully felt, that kindled from the beginning of my ministry a peculiar interest in boys. My consciousness of it was in revivals and every boy that evinced decided interest in religion instantly grappled me."

He organized a Boy's Meeting which became a bright spot in the life of many a neglected lad.

His second Summer arrived and again he hied himself away to the country,—this time to hold a series of revival meetings at the Fine Creek Church with Rev. P. S. Henson. "William E. Hatcher and P. S. Henson were both distinguished preachers at that early day" writes Dr. Geo. W. Hyde. "They were both exceedingly popular. These noble preachers held forth to great audiences for about ten days." Some happy sequels were to follow from these meetings.

A bit of news reached him one day in Manchester that filled his sky with blackness. It was his first experience of the kind and he thought that the end of his ministry had come.

Digitized by Google

"For a time I never dreamed that I could outlive it," he writes. "A big, rugged fellow turned the rumor into the street that he had seen me in one of the most disorderly bar rooms in Richmond and in my simplicity I believed that everybody would believe it and I had hours of entirely unnecessary anguish about it, although I knew that I had never crossed the threshold of a bar room. The rumor dissolved and I survived and I began to learn that, as a rule, slander will cure itself if you will only give it time."

From that day he seems to have adopted the policy of ignoring his slanderers—resolving that while he would look after his character, his reputation he would leave in the hands of God and of his friends.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

THE CIVIL WAR. MARRIAGE. REVIVAL EXPERIENCES.

1861–1866

BUT THE little squalls that had shaken his pastoral skiff were but faint breezes compared with the tempest that was gathering over his head. War between the North and the South seemed imminent. This young pastor had raised his warning in his address at the Grace Street Sunday School three or four years previously. For months he had detected the mutterings of the coming storm and he knew Richmond would be the center of it and as he stood at the head of his little flock he often trembled and cast anxious glances out into the future.

The news came that South Carolina and other states had severed their connection with the United States Government. The North called such action rebellion. The whole country was growing restless and the days arrived for Virginia to cast her vote either in favor of seceding from the Union, or against it. The Memorable "Secession Convention" assembled in Richmond, and the eyes of the South were turned thither awaiting the verdict. Mr. Hatcher hurried over with anxious steps to the Capitol and was in the jam and surge of the gallery crowd on that eventful day. He saw the Convention—saw the final, mighty effort to avert the split from the Union—and then he heard the Convention's fateful decision for,—*Secession*, and a few days later he saw the war cloud burst upon Richmond. "Ah what was it" says he "of battle, of tragedy, of victory, or suffering, or destitution, or wreck that I did not see during those pregnant and historic years."

Digitized by Google

An entirely new situation now confronted him. His church work of the past three years, so eminently fruitful, seemed in danger of being torn up by the roots. The men were being hurried into the army, the women were busy with sewing and other preparations for their departing husbands and sons, and the dominant thought was not religion, but war. In the meantime, the multitudes were flocking into Richmond which soon became the headquarters of the Southern army and of the new Southern government, and Manchester had to accommodate the overflow and to serve as a tramping ground and the young pastor found himself caught in the maelstrom of new and bewildering tasks. Not only did his agitated members, and the constant stream of strangers in his congregation, demand his attention; not only did he seek to maintain some semblence of church work, but the wounded ones in the hospitals, the sorrowing ones in the community, had to be visited and ministered to and the final words had to be spoken over the dead. The booming of the cannon around Richmond and the continuous passing of the soldiers through the town kept the people excited and often idle and reckless.

He lived rapidly during these frightful days and tragedies were his constant companions. For example, he tells of a bright, beautiful boy in Bedford, who had been converted in his Suck Springs meetings and who just before the war had informed Mr. Hatcher of his decision to prepare himself for the ministry. "He fairly shouted at the sight of me" says Mr. Hatcher "drew me from the sluggish train and breathed to me the story which burned as a fire in his heart." And then came the tragedy! The war blast rang through the state; this youth responded, fell a victim to measles in the trenches around Richmond, "died ingloriously in the hospital" and to the Manchester pastor came the harrowing experience of following the young man's body to his Bedford home and seeking to give comfort where the light of the family had gone out. Simply one specimen was this of the desolations that were ploughing his heart month by month.

Digitized by Google

The people were beginning to feel the pinch of the war. It looked as if everything had to go to the soldiers, and the folks at home lived on a scrimpy margin.

"There were no schools, no factories, no new buildings, no furniture stores, no dry goods stores, few places for buying plows, or wagons, or carriages. What we had was wearing out and 'twas hard to find any more, even if we had money to buy them with.

"The women attended no new Spring Openings and heard of no such thing as bargain counters. . . . I knew one pastor who said he was well acquainted with every bonnet and hat in his congregation and that there was scarcely one that he had not known for several years. They might be changed, re-dyed, or trimmed up in new colors, but they lingered all through the war."

The war had its compensations, however. In November 1862 a glorious revival broke upon his church and ran its course for many weeks, continuing through Christmas and far into January, the Herald of January 8th, 1863 reporting "There have been 115 professions of conversions at the Manchester Baptist Church and the meeting is still in progress."

"The first time this writer's attention was called to Rev. W. E. Hatcher," writes Mr. Jeffries of Warrenton "was when he was in co-operation with Rev. J. Wm. Jones, John A. Broadus, A. E. Dickinson, Dr. Doggett and others in their religious work with the Confederate soldiers when they were near to Richmond. . . ."

It is interesting to note how frequently his revival campaigns with other ministers would be attended with some amusing experience. There seemed to be in his nature something that reacted from a too prolonged, serious strain. In fact the solemn seems to lie along the border of the comical and if it is an easy passage from a tear to a smile it is also true that in many of his straining evangelistic seasons he would see something odd, or ludicrous.

Digitized by Google

He went to the assistance of a young ministerial friend in the country,—to aid him in revival meetings at his church. He threw himself ardently into the campaign and the meeting started off well. But there was trouble brewing.

"A dulness clutched the situation. You could feel it. It grew on apace until it scared me to preach—in fact I could not preach. My sermons dragged and lumbered and gave out neither heat nor light. I told the pastor that either I had lost my religion, or someone else had. But in my heart I was suffering. It cut me to the marrow in my bones to see things fail so. My sleep forsook my eyelids, and I made an August night forty hours long with my groanings. Daylight found me red of eye, full of fidgets and set on finding out something. I found it.

"The pastor was a College mate and we were chums. As a rule my chums are like popes and kings—infallible to me. I had no reproach for my chum, though he did strain me by his lack of fervor in the meeting. He was too congenial with a failure to suit my standards, and more so now because he was not always that way. But still I do not believe that I suspected him. One afternoon another man preached—preached forcibly and with effect. I sat in the corner near the pulpit, and the pastor was in the pulpit. When I looked at the man preaching I had the pastor in the line of my vision. I saw that he was not listening to the sermon. It got on to me hard as I saw his wilful inattention and I was distressed but not in an accusing mood.

"After awhile I saw that his gaze went often along a line which led to a certain window seat over on the ladies' side. His look was most absorbed and was attended with smiles—very tender and meaningful smiles. Candor forces me to say that I did not follow that line along which the pastor's enchanted glances sped so steadily—not until the congregation was singing the doxology. Then I looked and I saw a sight a very fair sight indeed, but a sight which told a story. It was upon a young woman with black eyes and cheeks of rose that the young pastor had been gazing to the absolute neglect of the sermon. It was a case of too much sweetheart for him to be wrapped in revival flames.

"The spirit of the reformer was upon me. I invited the offender to a stroll down by the milldam, and throttled him,

Digitized by Google

crushing him as best I could with my fierce accusations. He denied quite vaguely and largely, but in as guilty a way as you ever saw. He did, however, admit that he was an adorer of the young woman and with that he dropped all of his defences, except that he thought it due to himself to say that the young woman in question was the jewel of all creation and that his thoughts were running her way. I grew authoritative and said things. On general principles I granted that love was beautiful and marriage honorable entirely, but that for a young preacher to allow himself to be enmeshed in a revival meeting and jerked into a love scrape was unseemly and sinful. I expressed a purpose to take the next boat but he flew wild against it. Finally, I compromised to the point of agreeing that if he would blow the matter out of mind, pledge himself to give his attention wholly to the meeting and covenant not to say anything in the remotest way to the girl until the meeting was over, I would remain. To this he agreed,—in rather an impenitent spirit I must admit.

"After this agreement we strolled to the house where the young damsel lived, and the pastor clandestinely communicated with the young lady and asked to see her in the parlor alone, at once. He related to her the whole matter including his pledge made to me, and then added: "I wish to say to you that I fully intended to propose marriage to you this day but, this being rendered impossible by my pledge, I wish to notify you that as soon as the meeting closes I fully intend to court you."

"The meeting dropped to an early demise, and in five months the couple were living in matrimonial bliss on six hundred a year, Confederate money, valued at two cents and a half in gold to the dollar. They did well, but they killed that meeting."

In the Summer of 1864 there appeared a rift in the cloud for the young pastor. While attending an Association in Buckingham County he was introduced to a young lady from Fork Union,—Miss Virginia Snead—a recent graduate from the Albemarle Female Institute. She, with a party of young people, had driven over to the meetings. In the company was Mr. Pumphrey Seay who had known Mr. Hatcher at College, and during the intermission he brought the Manchester pastor up to the dinner table and presented him to Miss Snead. That afternoon Mr. Hatcher preached in the church.

Digitized by Google

The building was crowded and Miss Snead sat on the back bench where the noises coming from the loud talking out in the yard made it difficult for those in the rear to hear, but she found herself making earnest effort to catch the words of the preacher. His text was "God is love" and "every word seemed appealing. At that time he was slim and weighed about 140 pounds. His hair was auburn of a reddish tint; his eye was his best feature. In the discussions he was often called out to give his views and flashes of humor would break forth in his talks and addresses."

The fair visitor from Fork Union attracted him and in a few weeks he found himself at Fork Union attending the Albemarle Association and was entertained at the home of Mr. George H. Snead, the father of his recent acquaintance.

At the invitation of the pastor he held revival meetings at the Fork Church. "He was a great favorite. All were eager to entertain him. Crowds of young people went to spend the evening where he went."

While holding the meetings at Fork Union he stayed much at the home of Miss Snead, but he was very guarded in his movements. Already he had spoken to her the fateful words and received her affirmative response, but they were anxious to keep their engagement from being bruited around in the community to the injury of the meetings. He talked to the other members of the company each evening rather than to her and yet he wrote her a letter every night. The secret was kept until after the meetings were over and the announcement was then made of the approaching marriage on December 22nd.

In one of his letters to his fiancee he writes as follows:

"MANCHESTER, VA., November 10, 1864.

"DEAR JENNIE,—Time is unfolding startling scenes in my domestic drama. Four months ago I could hardly have imagined that aught could disturb the profound current of family quiet. Change in its wide spread ravages seemed willing to pass my home untouched. But we are touched.

Digitized by Google

Love has struck a blow at us and we are, as huntsmen say, flushed. Lest I should bewilder you by such a frightful preamble, I'll explain.

"There is no need that I should apprize you of the fact that your humble servant has fallen an untimely, if not unwilling, victim of love. I am, like Jonah, fairly caught, but pray that I may not like him be thrown overboard. It is not, however, of myself that I wish just now to write. Here is the point.: . ."

After writing of certain suggested housekeeping plans he thus continues.

"Let us think of each other—often and earnestly let us pray for each other. If God permits our union I pray that it may be for his glory. We can make each other very happy, or very miserable, just as we choose. All of our future is before us. Can we spend it without a harsh word, or an unkindly thought?

"Our feelings, hopes and plans must be one. No earthly object is to come between us. Errors will crop out now and then. With gentle sympathy, mingled with true candor, we must seek to extract them. I deny the blindness of true love. If it be blind, I am a stranger to it. It can not be so, for true love is founded on true appreciation of character and has the sanction of taste and judgment. It is quick to see faults in its object and, if conscientious, is anxious to correct them. But if it is quick of eye it is also tender of heart and slow of speech. Its voice of chidings is as gentle as its breathings of devotion and love. You will be my pride, I revel in the happiness of my love and, if not a christian, would gloat over the woes of my enemies. Now I pray for them."

The remainder of this letter is lost. The letter was written in pencil on very plain, yellow paper such as was used in those war-ridden days; the hand-writing is natural and plain. At the time of making his avowal of love he said to her that she would be to him "the first and only one," and yet he asked that she would not hinder him in doing his duty as a minister and not come between him and his God. The motto which he selected for the wedding ring was characteristic:

"Heaven smiles and claims us."

It was a merry and distinguished group that met Mr. Hatcher

Digitized by Google

one afternoon in Richmond at the Packet wharf about the 21st of December, 1864, to accompany him on the boat to Fluvanna to take part in the wedding festivities. This company included the following ministers: J. B. Jeter, Charles H. Ryland, A. B. Woodfin, John R. Bagby and Harvey Hatcher. Rev. Geo. W. Hyde, who expected to join the party at Dover, writes:

"When the night came for me to meet the canal boat at Dover I was sick in bed. I lay and heard the horn of the man, who rode the canal boat's horses, as he blew and blew and blew for a long time. My heart ached and my eyes filled with tears over the disappointment; but I could not join that happy wedding party of our dear friends that night on their way to Fluvanna county."

Brightly shone the sun on the little village of Fork Union on Dec. 22nd, and even grim war seemed to withdraw its pall while Dr. J. B. Jeter and the pastor, Rev. W. A. Whitescarver, sealed the happy vows.

The Southern "blockade" prevented a wedding tour and the people of the community seemed to vie with one another in their congratulations and hospitalities as the wedding party went from home to home. The Manchester church was of course on tiptoe of expectancy ready with a happy welcome to greet their pastor and his bride.

The war played curious pranks. For example, the Confederate money was already rapidly depreciating and Mr. Hatcher in describing his purchases before his marriage said:

"My ambition flamed up to the extent of giving my bride a watch and I went to the best jeweler in Richmond so far as I knew and found that he had only three watches in stock; one was new and it was ravishing to look at but its price mounted far out of my sight and I had to choose between the other two, both of which were second hand. I took the smallest and gave six hundred dollars for it but I can testify that it never respected its owner and after a day or two refused to take any note of time. . . .

Digitized by Google

"They trumped up a skeletonian reception on the day that the bridal party reached my home and the only fact—which was probably the only fat fact—I remember was that the turkey which constituted the pre-eminent luxury of the day cost forty-six dollars and we were proud to get it at that."

But what of the war?

The climax was near at hand and it meant crushing sorrows for Mr. Hatcher and his young bride. For nearly four stressful years he had kept his flag of hope unfurled before his people. During the past weeks however distressing news had trickled in from the "front," but even yet he and those around him did not despair. The long thin lines of Lee's army were still stretched around Petersburg, not far away, but this was all that stood between Richmond and the enemy. In a few days the crash of doom was heard.

It was Sunday April 2nd, and "a fairer day never blessed the earth," writes Mr. Hatcher. In company with others he was standing in his church yard. A man was seen hurrying towards them and as he came in front of the church he called out: "Bad news from Petersburg; Lee's lines were broken today and his army is reported in full retreat; Richmond to be evacuated tonight." With this announcement flung at the church yard group the man quickly disappeared.

"Instant blackness" said Mr. Hatcher "covered the earth. A pain, as of death, shot through my heart and in that dread moment I knew that our cause was lost."

The company in the church yard vanished and Mr. Hatcher turned his steps towards Richmond and what a spectacle there met his eye,—wagons, carts and carriages filling up with furniture, merchandise and articles innumerable. Panic ruled the hour and Richmond seemed to be emptying itself of all of its most sacred treasures and preparing for its bitter flight.

"My walk back to Manchester" he said "withered me into old age. It was simply one colossal collapse. I was a man with out a country, without a hope and almost without God in the world."

Digitized by Google

His own town, as he returned to it, presented a sight equally as sickening; and as for that night which followed—he said the story of it could never be told, with its weeping women, its riotous negroes and its hurrying columns of the retreating army. Next morning the torch was applied to Richmond and he withessed the flames as they were fanned into a conflagration. In the meantime, the Northern army began its rush into Richmond, and in Manchester the negroes and lawless whites began their mad carnival.

The young pastor faced a crisis. His army was gone,—fast hurrying southwards—and he suddenly found himself in strange and threatening surroundings. What should he do? He called for a meeting of the town Council. It was composed largely of old men. He reminded them of the necessity of something being done immediately to stem the tide of anarchy and to set up some form of order in the town. The old men seemed dazed and helpless. He and one of the town "Fathers" were selected to visit Richmond at once to seek from the Northern officials in the city some soldiers as a guard for Manchester.

Down the street, through the surging mobs, hurried the young pastor with his associate and in a short while they had picked their way over to Richmond and made known their request to one of the Generals whose army had already taken possession of the city.

The General, who was angry at the burning by the Confederates of the city with many of its treasures, frowned at them and called out gruffly:

"Why did you set this city on fire? You want soldiers for Manchester and I have not enough soldiers for my own purposes here in Richmond."

Mr. Hatcher in respectful tone said: "Inasmuch General as I do not live in Richmond I hardly see how I can be held responsible for the fire, and, besides, what I am looking for now is somebody that will keep my own town from being set on fire."

A faint smile lighted the grim face and, later on, a company

Digitized by Google

of negro soldiers were seen tramping towards Manchester and the situation improved.

It seemed that he was destined to have tilts with the Generals on the other side,—these encounters, however, drawing no blood and usually terminating with a touch of good humor. One day he approached the officer in charge of the Manchester troops regarding some wounded soldiers that were being cared for in the Baptist Church:

"Why don't you take the oath of allegiance [to the U. S. Government] and help me to restore order to this town?" asked the general in commanding tone. "You can help me keep order. Your government is in flight, your army in retreat. There is no hope for your cause." The man's manner seemed almost threatening and the pastor was put on his mettle.

"I will have to admit general" he said respectfully "that the outlook for my cause is gloomy indeed but it is my cause. I have been identified with the Confederacy from its beginning and while its situation is exceedingly distressing its government still exists and its armies are still in the fields. I would find a blush crimsoning my cheek if I forsook my colors in the presence of the enemy, and I confess that I would be utterly ashamed for it to go abroad to our army, or to our people, that I had made haste to take the oath. I would lose the good will of those who are more than life to me. I must wait the final issue and if that is the downfall of the Confederacy then I shall have no government, no country, no citizenship and no protection. That will be the time for me to decide what to do about the oath of allegiance."

"I must have a right warm little speech"; says Mr. Hatcher, "at least my heart got loose and ran flaming into my words and and some how I found myself gloriously indifferent to what he might think of my little oration. He looked at me with changing color and when I ended he still looked.

" 'I'll be dogged if I don't believe you are right,' he said with great feeling. 'And I believe it is best for you to wait.'

"It almost precipitated a scene. His cordial words kindled within me a sense of brotherhood.

" 'And now general' I added 'I think I may take the liberty of saying to you that if I can be of any service to you and you feel disposed to trust me you will find me at your command. I desire good order and peace as truly as you do.' "

Digitized by Google

"'Well sir, I can trust you and we will work together,' said he. "From that moment, I suffered no disturbance on the part of the Federal troops."

This incident, while characteristic in many ways, reveals one of Mr. Hatcher's cardinal traits, and that was his fondness for putting all his dealings with men on the brotherhood basis. Whenever a man was thrown with him, no matter how widely their tastes and habits and position might vary, Mr. Hatcher would soon find in the other man "a brother." He always probed for that spot in men; he seemed to know where it was located and when he found it he carried on his negotiations with that part of the man.

After Richmond's evacuation there followed, in a few days, the surrender of Lee's army and the utter collapse of the Southern Confederacy.

He writes:

"When the end came, the star of southern hope went down in blackest night. The days which followed were so full of bitterness and despair that many of the older people, stripped of strength and fortune, sank broken hearted to their graves. In almost every family graveyard there was a soldier's grave; sometimes it was the father, sometimes the brother, and sometimes the husband. Many sat down amid the ruins of the lost cause penniless and dejected and felt that there could be no future for them."

But not so, the young pastor. He faced the chaotic situation with grim but bouyant purpose and his qualities of constructive leadership were put to severe test, as regarded not only his dismembered church but also his wretched town.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE LETTERS

1866–1867

The condition of Manchester depressed and well-nigh exasperated him. Its streets and houses were shabby, the town was governed—or rather misgoverned—by a Board of Trustees, nearly all of them old men, and neglect and indifference stalked along the public ways. His instinct for improvement sprang into action and he yearned to bring about a change.

In one of the factories of the town was an orphan boy who longed for an education and in whom Mr. Hatcher had become greatly interested. One day Mr. H. K. Ellyson, who had recently started up the Richmond Dispatch, sent a message over to Mr. Hatcher asking him to lend his aid in increasing the circulation of the paper in Manchester. Mr. Hatcher saw that the request gave to him the double opportunity of aiding his factory boy and also of striking at the evil conditions in the town and so he said to Mr. Ellyson that if he would employ his little factory friend as his Manchester carrier for his paper that he would try to quicken the circulation by writing some Manchester letters.

He adopted a novel plan. He decided to take the place of a factory girl;—that is he would write for the Dispatch a series of letters about Manchester, just as if he were a girl working in one of the Manchester factories and signing, not her own name, but writing under the nom de plume of "Struggle." He determined that in writing these Struggle letters he would seek to awaken the town from its drowsy state in the matter of its streets, houses, factories, etc.

Digitized by Google

On Jan. 27th the first letter from Struggle appeared in the Dispatch and when the Manchester people opened their Richmond paper they saw the letter on the first page, parts of which read as follows:

"MANCHESTER, VA., January 25th.

"MR. EDITOR,—I am nothing but an humble factory girl but a mighty ambition struggles in my soul. From my girlhood I have felt a desire to be a newspaper writer. . . . Once I lived in the country,—alas my country home. We called it Chestnut Lawn, it was a happy home.—(go back ye gushing tears). A stranger has the place now. . . .

"A new notion flashed into my brain today. I have concluded to address you this letter respectfully asking (no disgrace for me) the privilege of writing for the Dispatch. Will you accept me? Why not? Don't despise me (as some do) because I am compelled to earn my bread by working in a cotton factory. If you allow me to write for you I shall have many things to say about factories and factory life.

"Manchester is a remarkable place. We have remarkable houses, remarkable streets and remarkables generally. Six commentaries could be written on this charming town. You shall hear of Manchester very freely if I write for you. Things don't move here in all respects to suit my girlish notions and it would ease me greatly to write under an assumed name and abuse some "persons, places and things" as my grammar used to say. In fact, I am a woman and think for myself, never hesitating to express my opinion. Some girls in the factory are mad with me for my speeches. I care not. What suits me, I praise; what annoys, I condemn.

"If you want me to write, publish this as a sort of introduction and when I get a candle and paper I will write more. As it would make me unpleasantly notorious to have my name known, I ask to be known under the name of

"Struggle."

The sleepy town rubbed its eyes and began to wonder who the factory girl was and what she intended publishing about Manchester. In the factories the question ran from lip to lip: "Who is this Struggle?" and many were the questions and jests that were bandied back and forth about the new factory

Digitized by Google

star in the literary heavens. Each morning the people watched for the second letter. It appeared in the Dispatch of Jan. 31st.

"MANCHESTER, VA., Saturday night.

"MR EDITOR,—Do you remember the first time you ever saw your own writing in print? When you read it did you not experience the most delightful sensation. . . ."

She then describes her anxious tossing during the night and her rapture on seeing her letter in print next morning. She thus continues:

"It is astonishing to witness the excitement which the appearance of my last letter has already produced. In the factory it is the theme of much talk. One girl, noted for the thickness of her lips and the redness of her hair, was greatly exercised on the subject. She expressed herself thus: 'Dont talk to me; I know what that gal is after; she is trying to get somebody to marry her.' I laughed aloud and heartily at her, for I supposed she referred to what I said about the celebrated missionary. . . . Many factory people think that heaven consists in getting out of the factory by marrying. I know a few girls who were doing well enough before they married; some of them have now to support their husbands and then furnish them their whiskey besides. . . .

Mr. Editor did you ever see a boss? If you never did I want to describe one (my own) to you.

"Struggle.

"P. S.—In my next I shall enlighten the public in regard to the streets of Manchester."

This letter unloosed the tongues of the town,—especially in the factory. When three days later the newsboy began to cry on the street: "Richmond Dispatch, Letter from Struggle," there were eager hands to reach for the paper—much to the delight of the ambitious newsboy.

"MANCHESTER, VA., Thursday night.

"MR EDITOR,—When I lived in the country I knew an old farmer who had eight sons, to each of whom he gave the name of a Roman general. There were Julius Caesar, Coriolanus,

Digitized by Google

Tiberius Gracchus and half a dozen more, with names equally as imposing. The old gentleman was immensely proud of these names. Not so with the boys. They mortally hated them and selected the drollest nicknames for themselves that could be found. In time their real names were, by most people, entirely forgotten.

"The streets of Manchester forcibly remind me of the old farmer and his boys. Somebody—to fame unknown—once upon a time did give to these elongated mud holes some very fanciful names. . . . Strangely enough the names of these streets, as far as I know, are rarely used. If you ask one where he lives, he never gives the name of the street, but unless his residence happens to be on the Main Street (which, by the way, is Hull Street) he will describe his location. Folks live in "Morgan's Row" in "Mark's old field" and "Around Sizer's Corner," but nobody dreams of living on a street which actually has a name. What these streets—so called—are intended for is a mystery to me. . . .

I boldly assert that there is not a road this side of Danville (I used to go to school there) as impassable for wagons or walkers as are the streets (except Hull) of this dilapidated town."

After giving a description of the manner in which certain streets have been dug up and certain streets been allowed to lie in wretched neglect, she continues;

"I wish we did have some town officers. I must stop. It is nearly midnight and factory people have to rise before day. You see what little time I have. I get home after eight o'clock at night and have to leave before seven in the morning. Isn't this night work outrageous. Very shortly I will let you hear from me in full on this subject.

"STRUGGLE.

"P. S.—I have read this to mother and she objects to my sending it. She says it is too rough; do as you please about publishing it. I mean no harm for I love Manchester. . . .'

On the next morning a communication appeared in The Dispatch attacking the Struggle letters and was signed "Citizen." Among other things "Citizen" said:

Digitized by Google

"Her statements in regard to the names and state of our streets are likely to do harm. Who would think of investing or settling here, under the light of her startling revelations? It is earnestly hoped that none will be misled by this fair young scribbler".

The editor subjoins the following comment:

" 'Citizen' is ungallant. As a lady can not hold him "personally responsible" for his offensive language he should have been exceedingly guarded in his expressions, but we have an idea that Struggle is able to cope with him with pen or tongue (this latter woman's chief weapon, offensive and defensive) and so we let him have his say. If he repent not his indiscretion ere long, then we are no prophet".

The situation grows lively and the little newsboy thinks that times are booming. The sentiment of the people regarding the Struggle Letters was much divided,—some declaring them outrageous, many others simply enjoying the fun, while still others hoped that the letters would awaken the town from its slumber. The interest in the letters was not bounded by the limits of Manchester, but prevailed in Richmond and in many places out in the state.

A letter appeared in the Dispatch signed "Fair Play" which took the side of Struggle and closed as follows:

"One word with regard to the fact in the case. I have been living here for many a long year and I really do not know the names of half a dozen streets in the place. Struggle is right: they are seldom called by their name and the wretched condition they are in is ten times worse than she represents them to be.

"FAIR PLAY."

There was no one who enjoyed the storm more than the young preacher who had caused it. Wherever Mr. Hatcher went he encountered,—as, indeed, nearly everybody else did,—the clatter about the Struggle letters. On the streets and in his visiting many of his conversations had the letters

Digitized by Google

of the factory girl as their theme and he plunged into the discussions of the publications as eagerly as did any one else.

"Mr. Hatcher" said some one to him one day. "Who do you think is writing those Struggle letters? Do you think it is really a factory girl?"

"There are some things about the letters" replied Mr. Hatcher "that sound very much like the talk of a factory girl; but then there are other features of the letters that wear the mark of a man correspondent. The fact is I often think they are written by some man. What do you think about it?"

A communication appeared on Feb. 6th which took the side of Struggle. It was signed "Push On."

Mr. Hatcher was particularly desirous that the Struggle letters should bring about a better condition for the factory girls.

An important announcement appeared in the Dispatch of Feb. 7th as follows:

"AFFAIRS IN MANCHESTER.

"We have secured the services of a reliable reporter for Manchester and in the future the citizens of that quiet, pleasant little town may rely on being kept thoroughly posted in all matters of importance. . . ."

This was the first step towards better things for Manchester. It was Improvement Number 1.

On the next day, Feb., 8th, the early cry of the Manchester newsboy announced another letter from Struggle. The people had been eager for it inasmuch as she had declared that she would express herself about the factories.

"MANCHESTER, Saturday night.

"MR. EDITOR,—I promised in my last letter to express my opinion very soon concerning the rule of these factories requiring their employees during nearly half the year to work until eight o'clock at night. As I have finished my ironing and mending earlier than usual to night I will consume the last sheet of my paper in protesting against the barbarity of this rule. . . . If the oppressed do not cry for mercy how shall they find relief. . . ."

Digitized by Google

She then draws a vivid picture of the evils of the night work and continues:

"Ah well, if we die, few weep; no bells are tolled, stock holders smile, as before, at growing dividends and pause not to ask whose life was taken to make them rich, and our places are soon filled.

"I am not through but the bell sounds midnight and mother commands me to rest.

"STRUGGLE.

"P. S.—Well, as you see, this letter was written on Saturday night. Little brother has had a bad cold as well as bad shoes and mother would not allow me to send him out until the weather moderated. Please send me all the papers for the week, as I have not seen one since last Saturday. I could sometimes borrow a copy of the Dispatch, but I am afraid to do it lest I should get questioned too closely."

The Dispatch of Feb., 9th contained the following item in the "Richmond Local" column:

"PERSONAL,—We announce with regret that Miss Struggle, our Manchester correspondent, had an unfortunate fall on Wednesday night on returning home from the factory, by which she sprained her right arm. The editor received a message from her on yesterday saying that her injuries were slight, but such as made it painful for her to write. She wishes us to say that in her next letter she will express her opinion of the article signed "Citizen." Let it come for we are waiting anxiously for it."

In the letters which Struggle received were several offers of marriage. She had stated that she sent her letters over to the Dispatch by her little brother and it was amusing indeed to note the devices which were employed to discover the little fellow in his tramps across the bridge. In this same issue of Feb., 10th, under the head of "Manchester Affairs," occurs the following item from the reporter:

"The condition of that street (name unknown) that leads up from the office of Dr. Chiles to the African church is terrible in the extreme and that section of the town near Vaden's old

Digitized by Google

factory will compare favorably with Five Points or any other abominable locality. . . . What the people want is a live Board of Trustees and not mummies and wooden men . . . . . We are requested by a friend—a tax payer—to ask to whom do the Board of Trustees report or have they ever reported as yet any account of their stewardship.

Ah, that Board of Town Trustees. The Municipal election occurs in the Spring and Mr. Hatcher hopes that that election day will prove the day of destiny for Manchester, when that Board will be neatly dropped into oblivion or at least into retirement and a new regime be inaugurated

His hands were of course busy in his pastoral labors. His Philologian Debating Society, his Singing School and his innumerable plans for enlisting the young and developing his church all made heavy drafts upon his time and strength.

"Richmond Dispatch, February 13th.

"Manchester on the James, February 10, 1866.

"Messers. Editors,— . . . On reading the paper this morning (the Dispatch of course) I notice that my silent friend Struggle has met with an accident. I certainly sympathize with her and trust that ere long she may be able to wield the pen again.

"Push On."

Certain suburbs of Richmond express their grievances in the Dispatch, each referring to Struggle.

The next letter from Struggle, which is largely a reply to "Citizen" concludes as follows:

"P. S.—My arm, though stiff yet, is rapidly improving. Would you like for me in my next to give you some account of the changes by which I was brought from Chestnut Lawn to the factory?"

The editor adds:

"Struggle will excuse us for calling her attention to her volubility—woman's reputed failing—and to the idea (also a woman's) that personal beauty is a necessary qualification for admittance to good society."

Digitized by Google

Struggle's next letter throws the town into laughter,—though many squirm under her lampoon. Already the decrepit town council has become the target for many a jest and they are resenting it—some of them quite furiously.

"MANCHESTER, Thursday.

"MESSERS EDITORS,—Frankness compels the admission that the temper in which I now find myself is not the most aimable. For several days mother has been suffering with unusual pains. That her sickness has been induced by the condition of the house in which we live is to my mind perfectly clear. . . .

"We would promptly seek another place but a wholesome remembrance that the frying pan is not to be lightly exchanged for the fire effectually restrains us.

"Manchester's houses (my present subject) are a peculiar institution. Their like has never been seen before and humanity fathers the hope that their like may never be seen again.

"There is a story among the neighbors here that Manchester was built during Noah's flood. This curious belief runs thus: they say that when the waters of the flood spread over the world many of the houses of Asia. owing to the compactness of their structure and the lightness of their material, were borne up by the swelling waters. They safely outrode the frightful storm and during the time were floated half round the earth. When the flood abated these houses were flung pell mell upon this hill by the receding waters.

"Several things lead me to regard this singular story as not altogether without foundation. . . .

"Let us see: Here is a residence with its end towards the street. . . . Out there in the lot are those celebrated brick rows whose dingy walls and blackened roofs bring to memory the "Deserted Village". What a pity Mr. Pickwick did not visit Manchester. . . . The Manchester homes are blissfully ignorant of the benefits of paint. . . . An old man told mother last Sunday that many of the houses in Manchester had not been painted since the war of '76. This I suppose is true. . . . We have an association here known as the 'Water Scoopers' whose members make fortunes in the wet season by removing water from overflown cellars. . . . The Manchester homes have also a pleasant way of leaking in bad weather. This is thought to be a great advantage inasmuch as it furnishes a new method of scouring; besides it serves to show the various uses to which buckets and pans can be applied.

"STRUGGLE."

Digitized by Google

Two startling, but joyful, announcements appeard in the Dispatch of March 5th under the head of Manchester Affairs. Nothing like it had been seen in the Dispatch for many a day; in fact it is doubtful whether just its like had ever been seen in that paper:

"MANCHESTER AFFAIRS.

"The Chief of Police has had the street hands very busy lately and has succeeded in improving wonderfully the appearance of some of the streets and is still at work.

"To the infinite pleasure of operatives night work has been suspended in the Manchester cotton and woolen mills and with all due deference to the stockholders we trust they will never be lit up again, as twelve or fourteen hours' work per day is not only injurious to the mind and body but contrary to right and the progressive spirit of civilization."

Mr. Hatcher was happy but not satisfied.

But the Spring election for Town Trustees was approaching. In the same issue containing the above two notices appeared another letter from Struggle on "The Windeaters" of Manchester,—those men who live on air, not having any visible means of support, men who lounge on the street corners and around bar rooms, getting home late at night and getting up late in the morning and speaking insultingly to the girls on the street. Struggle said these windeaters had red noses, and red eyes and looked as if they had been crying. Struggle then takes a crack at the Town Trustees by saying:

"In olden times, as I once read, mourners were regularly hired to perform at funerals. Had these "eaters" prevailed in those days they would have been useful. As it is now I see a use for them. If a trustee should die there would be some red eyes at his burial;—provided always that the "eaters" were present—otherwise there would be no red eyes there".

Struggle then proceeds to tell how these "eaters" annoy the ladies on the streets:

"On Saturdays as we go homewards these agreeable gentlemen form in knots and take us in as we pass. They say the most agreeable and pretty compliments in our hearing. One

Digitized by Google

will say: 'Howd'y to you my Spinning Jenny'. Another exclaims in graceful tones: 'Go it beauties, supper is ready' and yet a third, still more refined cries: 'Make way for the cotton grinders.' Is not all this delicious. . .

"STRUGGLE."

The Dispatch of March 8th tells of the organization in Manchester of a Building Fund Association which, the paper said, it was hoped would be a benefit not only to the stockholders but to the town as well.

The windeating loafers on the streets seemed to have vanished. At least Struggle in her next letter of March 17th says:

"My letter about the windeaters produced consequences that I did not anticipate. As soon as it appeared they disappeared most mysteriously. Little brother heard a gentleman say that a special train loaded with these gentlemen left on the Danville road last week for the South.

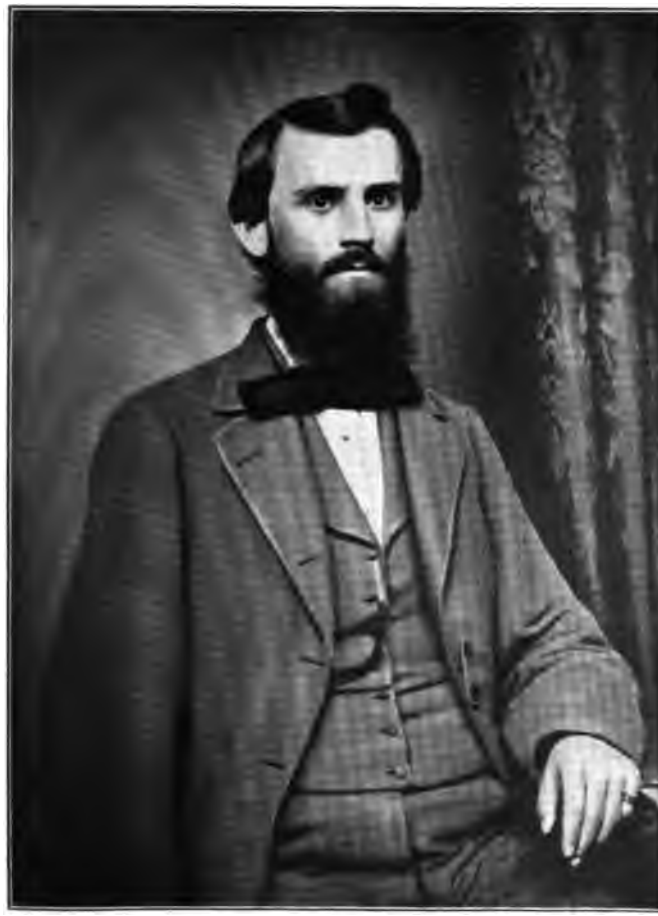
"This must be true. . . . A young man was seen on last Wednesday to walk down Main Street with a card pinned on his coat tail bearing conspiciously the inscription "A Windeater." Little brother happened to be at the depot when his attention was called to it. The language which he used when he discovered the card was so shockingly profane that my virtuous young relative declined wisely to repeat it. He stated distinctly that he was no windeater. . . ."

Struggle closed this letter with the surprising announcement that she would attend the concert at the Methodist church on the next Friday night and would give a report of it. She was true to her word. She went and in her letter of March 24th she gave a recital of the proceedings that was humorous in the extreme. Struggle thought that the Methodist church building showed signs of neglect and failed in its appearance to add to the good looks of the town and so she proceeded to ease her mind. Only a part of her spicy letter can here be given:

"MANCHESTER, Monday night.

"A boy remarked in the factory some weeks ago that the singing class at the Methodist church had sung the roof off the

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

house. . . At the time I supposed that he only meant to be witty at the expense of the truth. My knowledge of acoustics forbade my lending the smallest credit to the assertion. Now, since I attended the concert on Friday night, I am ready to believe that the boy told the truth,—partially at least.

"The wall of the church was horribly defaced by water which had evidently found an inlet through the roof. My opinion is that during the rehearsal of the class on some occasion of unwonted inspiration the room became so charged with melody that the roof was rent. If such be the fact it furnishes a most affecting illustration of the power of music. . . . Nor need we longer doubt the familiar assertion that music hath charms to soothe the savage, split a roof and,—summarily demolish a cabbage. . . .

"As the class sang the roof off, it seems simple justice to require them to sing it on again. This they can easily do. While they are in the roofing business it would be well to extend their labors to the church at which I heard the temperance speech. That also is in a leaky condition as indeed is every other house in this highly civilized town."

"What will this reckless Struggle attack next?" wondered the people. A critic seemed to be at large in the town and nobody knew where the lightning would strike next.

"Dispatch, March 26th. (Communicated)

". . . The leaky conditions of the churches will probably remain as they have been until the next concert. Then we promise Struggle a dozen tickets. . . ."

"Dispatch, March 30th. Manchester Items.

"The Streets,—The streets and by-ways of Manchester are now in very good condition. Mill Street has been well paved and a great many other improvements are being carried on.

"By order of the sheriff the election for trustees of Manchester as announced will take place on Monday April 23rd. Let our people take notice and be well prepared to vote discreetly and wisely for men who will labor for the advancement of Manchester and the welfare of its whole people.

"The Election of Trustees,——In view of the near approach of the election for Trustees every man is advised to pay his town taxes. The amount is small and the right to vote may be questioned when they are not paid. . . . There is some

Digitized by Google

talk of a large importation of outside voters but we believe that if the men of Manchester will only be true to themselves and to each other they can carry the town in spite of all outside influences."

The fight is on and Mr. Hatcher's ardent hope is that a new and progressive Board of Trustees will be elected.

"DISPATCH, April 14th. MANCHESTER ITEMS.

CONDITION OF THE TOWN,—Our worthy Chief of Police and his assistants have been very industrious lately and have put the town generally in good order. We trust they will relax no effort to place the town in a cleanly condition. . . .

"DISPATCH, April 16th. MANCHESTER ITEMS.

Let no one who has the interest of this town at heart fail to pay his taxes and secure himself the right to suffrage in the approaching election for Trustees,—an election fraught with matters of more interest than any that has occured for many years.

"RICHMOND TIMES, April 16th. FROM MANCHESTER REPORTER.

We are pleased to note that the town Hall has been greatly improved, whitewashed and painted and now presents quite a creditable appearance.

Some one in this issue of the Times, in order to perpetrate a joke on Struggle, published a notice of her death and thus wrote her obituary calling her Angelina Seraphina Struggle.

Mr. Hatcher received at about this time a call to the pastorate of the Franklin Square Church of Baltimore, a much larger and more attractive field than his own, but Manchester's claims upon him at that time seemed to him imperious and he declined the call.

Struggle saw the notice of her demise and in her letter in the Dispatch of April 23rd she said:

"I see no wit in the obituary. . . . There is one comfort left me. I have lived to read my own obituary and, paradoxical as it may seem, to enjoy the benefits of a posthumous fame."

The day of destiny for Manchester has arrived. It is Monday April 23rd.—Election Day. The people of the town

Digitized by Google

are to choose their Board of Trustees and there is a sharp contest between the old officials and a reform ticket.

On the next day the Dispatch contained the following announcement:

"ELECTION IN MANCHESTER,—The annual election for a Board of Trustees took place in Manchester yesterday and resulted in the success of the reform ticket."

There was music in that announcement for Struggle. The earthquake had come and a new regime was the result.

The first meeting of the new Board marked an epoch in the life of the town as it held its session *in public* and passed resolutions looking to many improvements, such as the establishment of a Market House, one or two Free Schools, a Board of Health, etc. Struggle knew that the battle was not yet over. She had her eye on those new officials and they were aware of it.

In her letter of April 30th she tells the story of the death of the old Board of Trustees whose terms of office had ended at midnight on Monday night.

"Thursday night.

"Manchester is in tears. A great sorrow lies upon the public heart. For some time it has been whispered that the health of our Board of Trustees was failing. . . .

"During last week a decided change for the worse was observable in the condition of the Board. Accordingly a celebrated physician Dr."In no cence" was engaged to undertake the case. He recommended a heavy dose of filed iron (ch) to be given with the greatest dispatch.

"At eight o'clock it was whispered about that the Board was dying. No language can picture the sensation produced by this announcement. The very sky wrapped its face in storm. The thunders rattled and rolled as if Jupiter was hastily evacuating Mount Olympus. The winds as if furloughed by Aeolus sighed and whistled in the strangest manner. The lightning, taking advantage of the suspension of municipal rule, pounced relentlessly upon a surburban stable and utterly destroyed it. The streets ran wild with water and woe. . . . Everything joined to echo a thousand times the mournful story: 'The invisible fathers are dying.'

Digitized by Google

"Just as the sun after stealing a sly peep from behind the lofty bank of a cloud was dipping his golden footsteps in the mystic seas of the West the tidings sad and painful went out: 'The Board has breathed its last.' Oh; grief. . . .

"The committee very properly decided that the body should lie in state at the Town Hall during Tuesday. While there several relatives and friends came and took leave of the precious remains.

"The hour fittingly chosen for the burial was midnight. . . The body was silently placed in a certain cart very dear to the Board in its life time and the procession, thus formed, slowly moved away. Just then the moon passed behind a cloud. The police and various other appurtenances wept aloud, the committee of seven joined hands and the clock struck twelve. . .

The services were then beautifully closed by a band of minstrels that chanted that original, appropriate dirge: 'Rest in peace and sin no more.'"

"DISPATCH, May 10th. MANCHESTER AFFAIRS.

"We believe that it is in contemplation to raise the taxes; but no one can object when they know it is to be expended in improving and beautifying our little town which, however homely, is the garden spot of the world to us.

Struggle now turns her attention to the new Board and gives them a portion of her mind, suggesting lines of improvements for them to adopt. In beginning her letter she can not resist the temptation to take a dig at the old Board of Trustees, even while it is in its grave.

"MANCHESTER, Monday night.

"Happily for the cause of civilization our old Board of Trustees has gone to the grave. In reviewing its official course it is a peculiar comfort that we are entirely free from all disagreeable debts of gratitude and will not be burdened in the least with the memory of its virtues. . . .

"The new Board, wreathed with the chaplets of popular favor and with the banner of reform waving above it, is now upon the stage. . . . It is to be hoped that they are not so unduly elated by their recent honors as to be unable to listen to sound advice."

Digitized by Google

Struggle then proceeds to set forth her ideas. She protests against the professional gamblers that infest the place and also the drinking shops. In urging that a certain nuisance be removed she says:

"I allude to a certain soap factory which stands in one of the most thickly populated sections of our beautiful town. I declare that I have sometimes been ready in passing it to reproach nature for bestowing upon me the common gift of an olfactory nerve. I am told that persons residing in the neighborhood of that factory have intensely Roman noses purely as a result of holding them so much. Oh, gentlemen of the Board, help. . . . I appeal to your common scents to decide whether it ought not to be done."

She published two other letters,—one on May 25th on the experiences of a poor girl in her efforts to dress properly, and one on June 2nd on "Gamblers in Manchester."

"DISPATCH, June 20th. MANCHESTER AFFAIRS.

"From being a place of no note, Manchester has lately assumed a position of some little magnititude among the towns of our mother state.

The reporter for the Richmond Times attacked Struggle and in her letter of July she replied in spicy and witty fashion.

In her letter of July 28th she takes the city of Richmond in hand, criticizing her for her proud and scornful manner towards Manchester. "Richmond . . . reminds me of a girl who, poorly raised, by a stroke of good fortune becomes the petted wife of some rich and stupid old bachelor. She decks herself in all the extremes of fashionable folly, assumes lofty flaunting airs and hastens to forget the humility of her origin."

Thus Struggle opens fire upon her vain neighbor across the James.

Even yet Struggle is not satisfied. Her next letter begins by saying:

"Manchester reminds me of a young dwarf with a broken back and a grey head."

Digitized by Google

She then proceeds to mention certain defects in the people of the town;—certain respects in which they fall far below the mark. She says they lack enterprise; that only a small portion of the children are being educated and very few of its young men aspiring to professional life and thus she goes on in the hope of shaming them out of their sloth and inflaming them with new ambitions.

The letters worked a revolution. The town became dissatisfied with itself and began to brush its straggling locks and to deck itself in clean and attractive attire. It had indeed caught a fresh ambition and entered upon a new career.

* * * * * *

In a revival meeting during the Summer at the Hopeful Church in Louisa County Mr. Hatcher showed his gift for touching the vital spot in men and in this case the results were unspeakably rich. In the meetings at the country church there was a very bright young man who had refused to be a christian. Mr. Hatcher walked to him in the church one day, leaned over to him and in a brief conversation said, "I believe that the reason you will not become a christian is because you are afraid you will have to preach." The young man almost collapsed under the thrust and admitted the truth of the charge. Mr. Hatcher, seeing that only heroic treatment would meet the case, put the two following alternatives before the recalcitrant young man. He asked him to read upon his knees that night at his home the 51st Psalm and then on the spot either decide for Christ or else write in his Bible "Resolved that I will never, never become a christian" and then throw his Bible in the fire. The youth accepted the challenge. On the next day he came out and made his public confession of Christ and a few weeks later Mr. Hatcher heard an early knock at day break at his Manchester door and there stood this same young man, who said: "I came to tell you good by; I am on my way to the Theological Seminary at Greenville to study for the ministry."

Digitized by Google

But this was only the first chapter in a story that had many happy sequels some of which will be told later.

It is interesting to note how quickly Mr. Hatcher adjusted himself to the new situation created by the victory of the North over the South. He emptied his heart at once of its enmities against the North, classed himself as an American and held himself ready to give a brother's grasp to any one from the other side who entertained a similar fraternal feeling. Some one writes that soon after the war Mr. Hatcher "went to Philadelphia and entering a building where a group of ministers were conversing he advanced with outstretched arm and open palm saying: 'The war is over—now lets shake hands.' "

He had drunk the bitter dregs of defeat—as his Southern brethren had done—and the experience nearly killed him; but his face was now towards the future and he embraced every opportunity that came to him for rebinding once more the two torn and bleeding sections.

A second call from the Franklin Square Church of Baltimore was successful and in its issue of Feb. 7th the Religious Herald of Richmond contained the following:

"Rev. Wm. E. Hatcher on last Sunday resigned the pastoral care of the Baptist Church in Manchester, having accepted a call from the Franklin Square Baptist Church Baltimore. We congratulate our Maryland friends believing that brother Hatcher will be a power among them as he has been for some years among us."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

BALTIMORE PASTORATE. LECTURE ON THE DANCE

1867–1868

It was a hazardous step which this young preacher was taking in uprooting himself from his native state where he was gaining such a good foothold and transplanting himself in another state whose religious conditions were vastly different from those which he was leaving in Virginia. He had, however, lived a life of stress and turmoil in Manchester. His members, with a few exceptions, trod the humbler walks of life, many of them working in the factories. In Baltimore he found a membership in which there was both wealth and culture, and many royal homes into which he delighted to go. In the size of membership, the prominence of the church and the social privileges afforded, the Baltimore pastorate was much superior to the pastorate which he had left; but on the other hand, Baltimore was a Catholic stronghold, the Franklin Square church was badly located and the church itself had been sorely shaken and torn by issues connected with the Civil War. Besides, the Baptists were one of the weakest denominations in the city; but in spite of unfavorable conditions he plunged enthusiastically into his new work and was very happy in it. Virginia seemed to have retained a part interest in his services, however, and was frequently calling him back for some form of ministerial service. The Warrenton Church claimed him for revival meetings where he found a new friend, Rev. H. H. Wyer, another one of those noble, kindred spirits to whom his soul became knit in an unbroken friendship.

Digitized by Google

He brought with him from Manchester a bright attractive boy, Harvey Nunnally, who lived in his home in Baltimore.

During the Summer Rev. George B. Taylor, his soul's beloved, paid him a visit of several days and he tells of two of their indulgences. One day they made a mutual agreement that each would criticize the other; that they would first take time for reflection and then fire off their indictments.

"It fell to my lot" writes Mr. Hatcher "to begin 'the butchery,' and I raked up everything that I could think of against him and bore down upon him with unsparing candor, though to my loving eyes he was full of nobleness. He took my criticisms in excellent part and charged me with not doing him justice—not by reason of my severity, but on account of my 'weak-eyed partiality.' When his turn came to dissect me he ignobly fled from his task. The strife for once threatened to grow sharp between us as I charged him with not doing me fairly. He laughed a most disarming laugh and said he was color-blind, in part at least, and could not see the faults of friends.

"Dr. Taylor suffered much from vocal weakness, or rather from speaking in a higher key than nature designed should be used. My partial study of voice-culture enabled me to make him aware of his mistake. His eagerness to correct the error was most interesting and was in line with his vital passion to do his best in everything. We spent many hours in making the correction effective in his case and by his patience he achieved a really unusual victory and he wrote a remarkable article in the public press in which it was made clear that he had studied the matter to the bottom and had won by using his ample information."

He had been warned before coming to Baltimore to beware of the great and colossal Dr. Richard Fuller, pastor of the Seventh Church, who was said to be not only inaccessible to young preachers but often cold and unsympathetic towards them. To one of these doleful counselors he bluntly replied: "Well I do not expect to sleep with Dr. Fuller and I shall not

Digitized by Google

expect anything of him that he does not choose to do for me." He also added that he felt himself a young colt with no desire "to be yoked with the great American lion of America." But he had many pleasant experiences with the old Doctor. There was nothing so interesting to him as a human being and when the particular human was such a king among men as Dr. Fuller he fairly reveled in the contact. He tells of a visit that the Doctor paid him soon after coming to Baltimore,—a visit which, he says "had in it so much of a man and was so courtly, so delicate, so free from patronage and so rich in brotherly cheer that I could have gone out on the hills and shouted all by myself."

It was at this time that he prepared a lecture which attained sudden and wide popularity,—a lecture which traveled up and down Virginia for several years. Many were the church debts that it helped to pay: many, the women's societies and missionary bands whose treasury it helped to swell. The subject of the lecture was: "The Advantages of the Modern Dance" and its treatment showed humor, wit and satire.

Dr. J. C. Hiden, probably one of the ablest literary critics among the Baptists in that day writes:

"If anybody in Portsmouth did not hear Rev. Wm. E. Hatcher's lecture in the Court Street Baptist church recently then he missed a specimen of genuine satire. We have seen very little true satire in this country; and all imitations or affectations of it are especially disagreeable. But we must confess that the satire which we enjoyed on that occasion is very much to our taste. It differed essentially from Juvenal's fierce invective in which we can not see much satire; and from the misanthropic spleen of Swift which makes us sorry for the satirist who has worked himself up into such a rage. It is such a picture of the extravagances, the caprices, the somersaults, the airs and the graces of would be fashionable dancers as must attract attention wherever delivered. It is worth a whole volume of sermons against worldly amusements and we think is more effective than all the sermons against dancing that we have ever heard with all the tracts, essays and newspaper articles thrown in so as to make weight.

Digitized by Google

"The audience was the largest that we have seen here on any similar occasion and was entertained from beginning to end."

His lecture, in waging war against the modern dance, surprised the audience by its mode of attack. It declared that the advantages of the dance accrued to the Doctors—in the ailments that it produced in its victims; to the Merchants—in the lavish expenditures of attire and eatables which it necessitated; and to all lovers of democracy by the breaking down of all social distinctions and the jumbling together on a level of all the dancers. He began by saying:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—So far as I know I am the first man to venture upon an American platform as the friend and champion of the Dance. . . ."

After speaking of the opposition raised against the indulgence he continues:

"The pulpit has hurled its solemn anathemas against it. Churches have deliberated, resolved and legislated and sometimes have seized the nimble footed lovers of the Dance and compelled them to execute the celebrated back step movement by which they were shuffled from the visible church into the populous country of the heathen and the publican.

"Hard hearted fathers, fastidious mothers and dyspeptic guardians have, in at least a million of cases, resorted to threats. bribes, bolts and bars to preserve these giddy responsibilities from its supposed contaminations. Books, magazines and papers have poured forth flood-like over the earth for the express purpose of showing the abstract sinfulness of shaking one's feet.

"Against this array of leagued opposition I do most boldly and defiantly set my face. I mean that the Goddess of the Dance, so long the victim of oppression and injustice, shall find in me a deliverer. . . ."

After painting the difference between "the Dance" and "Dancing," he mentions the things that every Dance must have:

Digitized by Google

"First it must have a place.

"Second, it must have a time. It is sufficient for me to say that its chosen, if not its only time, is night, and that, with greatest possible modesty, it asks for all night or at least as much of it as remains after the performance begins.

"Third, it must have Music. . . . Anything from a first-class Band to a dilapidated banjo will be acceptable. Candor, however, compels me to say that of all instruments respected in the romping kingdom of the Dance, Jack Dowdy's fiddle is the favorite. Its first premonitory creak ravishes every ear and quickens every tongue and starts every toe.

"Fourth, the Dance must have men and women. . . .

"I submit as my first proposition in favor of the Dance that it is highly beneficial to the medical profession."

He then declares that doctors,—whom he calls administrators of "castor oil, ipecac and calomel"—*must have a living*, that their expenses are heavy and they must therefore have money, their business must in some way be stimulated and he thus proceeds to tell how it can be done.

"Gather up all the young people; let the young men cram themselves into tight boots and tight pants and tight collars—and to make the picture true to nature—let them be tight generally; let the girls dress themselves as tightly and as lightly and as slightly as possible; send for the indispensable Mr. Dowdy and require them to begin at eight o'clock and skip, hop, whirl and leap all night long,—except one hour at midnight which is to be employed in crowding their delicate little stomachs with such delicious poisons as frozen lemonade, French candy and fruit cake. Let the dance occur in a room that is close and hot. Dismiss the party just in time for them to come in contact with the damp chill air of the early morning in returning home.

"This plan acts like magic. Its results are not always rapid but inevitable. Sure as the night was made for sleep; sure as over exertion is more injurious in the night than in the day, sure as raw air is fatal to a relaxed system, so sure will these nocturnal revelries make work for the doctor. His harvest may not come in a day, but come it will in the Neuralgia, Bronchitis, Rheumatism, Dyspepsia, Catarrah, Pneumonia and Consumption of the dancer.

"I announce as my second proposition that the dance is the patron of Commerce.

Digitized by Google

In speaking of the preparations of dress for the dance he says:

"The young men must have their white vests, cropped-tailed coats, fancy pants, new gloves, plastic boots or requisite slippers. Their moustaches must be trimmed, rubbed, dyed and twisted and their hair must be shampooned, cut and split open behind. The old bachelor, or widower, must be taken through the identical process with the addition of dye for the hair and sometimes dead hair for the head, perfume for the breath, braces for the shoulder and cotton for the toes."

He passes next to the attire and adornments of the young ladies,—but the above will give an idea of the plan and style of the lecture which closes with the following:

"If, however, you desire a sound body, a full purse, select, safe and refined associations, a politeness which springs from modesty and intelligence and a piety undwarfed by the foul air of doubtful endulgence then I do say with kindly but mightiest emphasis that you must never, never, never dance."

"What a time we had that night" writes Rev. S. M. Provence who heard the lecture at the First Church Richmond in 1867. "From that time I have heard you whenever I could."

He delivered the lecture in Richmond in 1868 and a secular paper of Feb. 6th, 1868, after describing it as a "perfect kaleidoscope of wit and humor, satire and sarcasm, interwoven with graphic and life-like portraitures," added "The proceeds of the lecture here were devoted to the ministerial students of Richmond College and to the Dorcas Society of the Leigh Street Church."

He discovered that he had left a large part of his heart in Virginia when one day his door bell rang and a committee from the First Church of Petersburg, Virginia were ushered in and sought to capture him for their church. He thus describes his feelings upon the occasion:

"A Virginian is a stark fool to everybody except to Virginians. Other people may feel as they please but only a Vir-

Digitized by Google

ginian knows how a Virginian feels.. I had fooled myself to death in believing that I was happy out of Virginia but the spirit of about twelve generations of Virginians lay sullen and restless within me. It gave me time to enjoy my delusions for a season but when the gateway of the Old Doninion flew open and I saw the track clear and straight before me I felt that the millennium was at hand. All this may sound like idiotic prattle to an outsider but let him rave. He doesn't understand it at all."

In a short while the tidings went forth that the Franklin Square pastor had accepted the Petersburg call.

He says "I walked the mountain heights of rapture." Not that his Baltimore pastorate had not brought him rich joys, nor that his work had not been amply rewarded, but Virginia was the place where he was to work out his destiny and the fact seemed to break like a revelation upon him. What he wrote about Dr. Jeter seems to apply equally well to himself:

"An invisible hand guides our steps, call it what we will There is a subtle force which dominates our life and determines our course. It is stronger than our caprices and mightier than our purposes. It shifts us from our chosen track and thrusts us into situations of which in advance we could never have dreamed.

He had at this time two children,—Eldridge, his first born, who was nearly three years old and his daughter, May, who was a few months old.

"My life was very happy in Baltimore" writes his wife. "It was a beautiful city and choice friendships were formed there which it hurt me grievously to sever. I was coming to love it more and more."

Some one, writing regarding his Commencement address, during this Summer, at the Roanoke Female Institute in Virginia, said "Dr. W. E. Hatcher, gave the piece de resistance of the bill of fare—unique, picturesque, humorous, impressive. But you know him."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

1868–1872

PETERSBURG. PERSISTENT DRILL IN SERMON MAKING AND IN LITERARY COMPOSITION. INTEREST IN BOYS.

In going from Baltimore to Petersburg he went from a city of over 200,000 to a city of less than 20,000. Petersburg, about 20 miles from Richmond, was a quiet, conservative city, but filled with choice people and delightful homes, the First Baptist church having in it some of the finest families of the city.

From the beginning his heart was set upon having a great revival for his church, and in the Spring his efforts bore fruit in a rich revival. For eight or nine weeks the meetings continued, services being held every night, he himself doing the preaching. The entire city was stirred, many of the stores being closed during the afternoon services.

"On Sunday," says a writer in the Herald of June 3rd, "I witnessed the most important scene that has ever taken place in the First Baptist Church of this city [Petersburg]. Sixty three were given the right hand of fellowship and the attendance at the Communion was the largest ever witnessed in this city."

At this time his soul flamed with an ambition to make great sermons and he went into special training. It was in Petersburg that he formed his sermonic and literary style.

His study was up in the tall tower of the church. How grim and dark it looked to me at nights! With its tortuous, unlighted stairway and its gloomy heights it was, to my boyish imagination, the place where the booger men and assassins

Digitized by Google

were lurking in the shadows to pounce upon my Papa as he came down those many winding steps from his study and out into the open air so very late at night. My only thought about the study was: "How brave is my Papa to go up there every night by himself." But I did not understand. It was there that he was forging his homiletical habits and drilling his pen for its future tasks.

"How I would hate" said his wife "to see him get up from supper table every night to go to his study, there to stay until nearly midnight and leave me so lonely at home and yet I knew it was for the best and I did not complain."

Let it be remembered that he came to wield a pen which Dr. F. C. McConnell said "charmed and instructed the whole world. . . . That facile pen, trenchant as pleasing, shall never be equalled, certainly within many generations" and Dr. John Clifford of London, who is very probably the leading Baptist minister in Europe, told an American visitor in London that he read everything he saw from the pen of "W. E. H." Scores and probably hundreds told William E. Hatcher the same thing.

"Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well."

His method of work was frequent rewritings of sermons and addresses. He said that he wrote one address over twenty times. It was this ceaseless, remorseless tugging at his sentences and paragraphs that gave him his final mastery over his pen. In composing his sentences he would seem to challenge every word. All that troup of infirm, worn-out words and phrases that wait at the door of every writer and do service on all occasions he had no welcome for. He simply would not use them, unless he found that there were no better ones to be had. He would hold the truth glowing before his mind while he rapidly searched right and left, high and low, for just that word or group of words that would best flash forth the truth before the reader. And then after he had put the

Digitized by Google

MRS. WILLIAM E. HATCHER

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

truth on paper, he would still prune and reshape its sentences.

It is reported that Cicero studied hard and labored to "bring his sentences to the highest polish" always insisting upon the opportunity for ample preparation before he delivered a public discourse. He found himself however engaged to deliver an address before the Assembly on a certain occasion and the hour for the address drew near when he was far from being ready. At this moment one of his servants brought him the announcement that the meeting of the Assembly had been postponed for a day and he was so overjoyed at this news that he gave the slave his life's freedom.

Blessed is the man who is ready when his task comes and such readiness is the result of grinding drill and toil in secret.

"True ease in writing comes from art not chance
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."

Men differ in their methods for attaining the highest style in writing. "Voltaire always had lying on his table the petite Careme of Massillon and the tragedies of Racine—the former to fix his taste for prose composition and the latter for poetry." From the early centuries comes a gleam of counsel from Longinus who says:

"Think how Homer would have described it; how Plato would have imagined it and how Demosthenes would have expressed it. . . and you have a standard which will raise you up to the dignity of any thing that human genius can aspire to."

We are not admitted into the literary or homiletical workshop of the Petersburg pastor and yet he does drop some hints as to his methods.

"A noble thought" says he "may sicken for lack of vigorous expression. Trim, polish and refine every paragraph, sharpen every sentence to the keenest edge and let each word bear part in giving body to thought."

Digitized by Google

He shrank from loading his sentences with useless luggage. He declared war against adjectives and branded them as his enemy. They swarmed about his pen and with fairest promises clamored for enlistment. He had in his earlier days yielded to their charms but his productions had suffered shipwreck at their hands. For a fresh, lustrous adjective he had high respect. He kept his scouts ever busy searching for such and when found they met a bounding welcome.

"We admire adjectives" he writes "They are the fringes and ruffles on the vesture of thought,—somewhat useful and greatly ornamental. Young mothers have been known to smother their babies with a profusion of dress; but even that is not so distressing as the sight of a youthful genius crushing his ideas beneath a mountain of comparatives and superlatives."

It was this daily drill which not only gave him his literary style but which enabled him, in the long stretch of his later life, to compose with such ease on the platform or in the pulpit.

A gifted woman writes:

"Dr. Hatcher possessed a wonderful vocabulary. I always devoured everything he wrote. Sometimes I said: 'He must have an edition de luxe of Webster Unabridged'. No one knew better than he how to couple words which Oliver Wendell Holmes said 'had loved each other from the cradle upwards.'"

The Herald of that day says:

"Brother Hatcher of the First Baptist Church Petersburg teaches a Bible class of twenty five men in the Sunday School and also has charge of a class in an afternoon mission school. He meets a class of one hundred once a week to whom he gives instruction in vocal music." After leaving Petersburg he never taught in the Sunday School.

Two weeks later this paper stated "The First Baptist Church of Petersburg, Va. . . . pays the pastor $1,800 and is proposing to increase it to $2,000. The salary is paid quarterly in advance."

Digitized by Google

"THE MURDERESS AND HER DAUGHTER"[81]

I find among his papers the manuscript of a sermon apparently prepared at about this time. It shows the usual marks of care in preparation; the sheets are stitched together. The sermon is entitled "The Murderess and her daughter" and thus begins:

"The chronicles of the world can show no blacker page than that which contains the history of the Herods. Their name is rank with infamy."

He thus describes the entrance and the dance of Salome:

"But Hush; 'Stand back' the entering herald cries. 'Stand back' he cries yet louder, for the party, flushed with wine and mad with revelry, are slow to hear. 'Stand back', he shouts in tones of thunder 'and let the Princess of beauty do honor to our king.'

"Wide open, as by magic, springs the door amid strains of music and, like a fairy queen, bounds forward the elastic and fascinating dancer, Salome. She trips—she glides—she spins—she circles—she whirls—she leaps—she swims. A thing of unearthly beauty glittering. flashing and enchanting she floats about the royal parlor, now here, now there, now yonder—everywhere, although her task performed she droops in charming weariness at the feet of Herod to catch his admiration and rewards.

"Her request is granted."

The sermon closes with the description of the bloody climax.

His next door neighbor was a family whose members belonged to his church. He had recently told them a ghost story of some medical students in the darkness of the night stealing from a grave yard the body of a big negro. He told how they brought the dead body secretly to the Medical college, lugged it to the cellar door and with a long and careful swing hurled it through the door and over into the darkness and depths of the cellar and to their horror, as the big body struck the bottom of the cellar, it gave a loud and sudden groan. That groan was the shock and climax of the story.

Digitized by Google

One Sunday night during the summer he was sitting on his porch after returning from church. In a little while he became aware that the high porch of his next door neighbor was filled with people and that one of the ladies of the family was telling the above mentioned ghost story. She was taking her time and was describing minutely the decision of the students to go out some night in search of a body. He knew what was coming. He slipped to the back of his house and came quietly around under the high porch of his neighbor where he crouched and listened. The lady was forging ahead with the story and was standing and gesticulating to make her narrative more vivid. She came near the climax as she said: "the young men came to the cellar door with the big black body and they began to swing the body so as to give it a momentum and they swung it out and down into the darkness and when the body struck the ground the body said"—and just as she reached that point and before she could utter the next word, Mr. Hatcher under the porch gave forth a most prodigious and dismal groan that fairly woke the echoes on the porch. Miss ——— dropped in their midst, as if struck down by the ghost himself, and terror took full charge of the situation.

In the meantime, Mr. Hatcher, barely able to smother the storm of laughter that was threatening him, managed to get himself quickly away and a few minutes later down the street from the direction of his church he came whistling a tune and looking the picture of innocence.

"Oh, Mr. Hatcher" they cried from the porch "Come here quick" and he hastened to the front gate whither they all rushed from the porch. "Oh Mr. Hatcher let me tell you" they began, several talking at once and immediately they proceeded to lay before him in all its ghastliness their experience of the last few minutes, to all of which their pastor listened with the most childlike interest."

Whether he dispelled their illusion that night, or on the morrow, my recollection breaks down at this point and the reader must put his imagination on duty for the rest. But

Digitized by Google

I do know he had rollicking times with them afterwards when he would request Miss ———— to tell him the story about that midnight haul from the graveyard."

To have seen him at his best during these days one should have caught him on a trip with a boy. One day, for example, he rang the door bell of one of his members and called out to the mother: "Tell Charley to have his valise packed and himself ready at the 7:30 train Tuesday morning if he wants to go with me to the Portsmouth Association for a three day's trip." The mother's eyes as well as lips, gave forth her glad response as, after a few other words, Dr. Hatcher hurried away. Great news she would have for Charley—"A trip with Dr. Hatcher." What talks of preparation the family had that day. Plain people they were and little Charles was a sprightly well behaved lad. But he had hardly had a bright visit anywhere in all his days. Other boys had told him of their trips. Of course he was ready on Tuesday and the father had him at the depot in good time.

And such a trip it was for Charley. How fine it was to jump on the train and go gliding along out of Petersburg; he was introduced to preachers on the train and nobody had ever done that for him before—and then the ride from the country station to the church and the big wide country how glorious it was—and it looked as if Dr. Hatcher was thinking more about him than he was about himself—and it seemed that nearly everybody who spoke to Dr. Hatcher also spoke to him—and the Association—well, the speeches in the church got a little tiresome and he was so glad that Dr. Hatcher after the service introduced him to seven other boys—and then the dinner on the tables in the yard with its chicken and ham and pies and cake—and Dr. Hatcher, although he was all the time shaking hands and talking to people, yet seemed determined that the boy should have something of all the good things that came around as he would tell the women about his Petersburg boy that he had brought along—and that made them so kind—and after that second

Digitized by Google

service it looked as if so many people wanted Dr. Hatcher to go home with them that night—and that ride from the church behind those fine horses—and those boys at the house where they went and Dr. Hatcher making him run out with them and have a good time and that big orchard of apples—and those grapes—and the fine supper and the nice room that Dr.Hatcher and he slept in and then, next day, the ride to the church and—Oh, but didn't he hate to leave it all and go back to Petersburg but Dr. Hatcher said he would take him again some time—and what times he had at home telling and telling and telling of his "big trip with Dr. Hatcher".

Does any one doubt that the sparkling eyes of that boy, his happy talk, and comradeship put youth and bouyancy into the heart of Dr. Hatcher as he sought not only to give the boy a trip about which he could talk and dream for months to come, but also to drop into his heart helpful and inspiring influences? That boy from that day had an open mind and heart for the pastor.

One day he was in a brother pastor's home when this pastor told him of the poor health of one of his little boys. "Let him go with me on my trip to the mountains" said Dr. Hatcher. He went and upon his return showed marked improvement. He has often spoken of the happy hours spent with Dr. Hatcher. He lived to fill some of the high offices in the state. He loved to take a boy—a lonely boy, a boy with a hard, barren life—and give him a gloriously happy time.

It was during his Petersburg pastorate that he held a meeting at the Tucker Swamp church where he had an interesting experience with a country boy. This boy, Walter P Hines, now a Southern pastor, thus tells the story:

"About two years after my conversion I heard on a Monday morning that Dr. Hatcher was at old Tucker Swamp church in a meeting. Nothing would do but that I must go to the meeting that very day. With my father's consent I saddled old Fanny, the gray mare, and went off in a swift gallop for the church. The hour was late and I thought if I went around

Digitized by Google

the road I should miss the morning sermon, so I put out down the railroad track, it being a short cut to the church. The section boss, Mr. Jim Holland, saw me and manned his hand-car and put out after me. After a chase he overtook me and informed me that it was against the law to ride on the track and he would have to arrest me. But I left the track and took to the woods and made my way out to the road. When I returned home I went to the section boss and apologized, and he smiled and told me not to do that again because it was dangerous.

"After a hard ride I reached the church, hitched old Fanny to a tree and got in the house in time to hear the text announced. So soon as the audience was dismissed I rushed up to Dr. Hatcher and he took me in his arms. I am sure I was the happiest boy in that church.

"I spent three happy days with Dr. Hatcher, going to the home in which he was entertained at night, and then reluctantly turned old Fanny's head towards home. In my young heart my father was first and Dr. Hatcher next. Often in my home Dr. Hatcher urged my father to make every sacrifice necessary to educate me."

"He was always the boys' beloved companion and inspirational friend," says Dr. C. T. Herndon. "He possessed the power to breathe into them the purest and best manhood. No youth ever came in touch with Dr. Hatcher but that he was shown the beauty and might of pure and cultivated manhood."

One day there was a knock at his study door and a boy about fourteen years of age walked in. The boy in later years in telling about his visit says: "Dr. Hatcher wheeled around in his chair and took me on his knee and with his arm around me said: 'Tell me your trouble my boy!'. He got my confidence at once and I would have told him anything then. He baptized me on the next Sunday night". That boy's name was Hugh and he is today Dr. Hugh C. Smith, pastor at Bedford City and Clerk of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Hundreds of boys he took with him on a walk, or a ride, or a trip to a dedication, an Association, a lecture, or a protracted meeting. It was this that kept the fountains of his own life

Digitized by Google

fresh and sparkling. He caught the boy's spirit. He took their point of view. He felt the thrill of their radiant natures and refreshed his tired soul by drinking from their spontaneous life.

He took me with him to Richmond one day and on the train he suggested that I sit by the window on one side of the car and he would sit by the window on the opposite side and that we would both count the houses on our respective sides to see which one would count the largest number of houses. A gentleman said to me recently: "Dr. Hatcher could be a boy with boys and he could be a man with men."

He went to Caroline county to marry a couple. Among the visitors at that wedding was a boy who today is an honored Baptist minister,—Dr. Andrew Broaddus who thus writes regarding himself and Dr. Hatcher:

"It was at a wedding where music and mirth prevailed. A young preacher present quietly passed his arm around a timid boy and drawing him to his side spoke a few, tender words to him about his soul. The memory of those words will abide with me through the coming years."

How many hundreds of such timid boys were drawn to this preacher's side and made to feel that there was a great heart interested in them and heard words that followed them through all the years.

Rev. Robert H. Winfree in a published address said: "If I were a sculptor, and could put into granite what was the crowning glory of Dr. Hatcher's life I would carve in granite his strong and manly form holding out a helping hand to a struggling youth and lifting him into power and usefulness."

He himself writes:

"I have known boys—lovely beautiful boys—fair haired, bright browed, with rich joyous laughter—with love beaming out of their eyes—with boyish honor written on their faces—reared in the nursery of motherly love—trained to prayer, charity and virtue—full of modesty, gentleness and worldly excellences:

Digitized by Google

"And, Oh sorrow! I have seen those boys fall. In temptation's hour they have become the victims of drunkenness, debauchery gaming or some other sin. What a melancholy transformation. A few brief years at most of sinful indulgence withered all that was lovely about them and changed the once innocent and lovely boy into a blighted, wicked, debased, foul-mouthed blackhearted, demonized monster."

It was the picture of such a possible doom that drove him to the rescue of the young lives around him. His Petersburg pastorate was not marked by heavy thunder nor dazzling lightning, but was rather after the fashion of the quiet, steady stars. He was the beloved pastor of a church that was rich in spiritual and social gifts and in denominational activities. He kept his finger on every department of Sunday School and church work and in the city nearly every man was his friend. His eye swept the circle of the surrounding counties and their churches were frequently calling him to their aid for sermons, addresses, lectures or revival meetings.

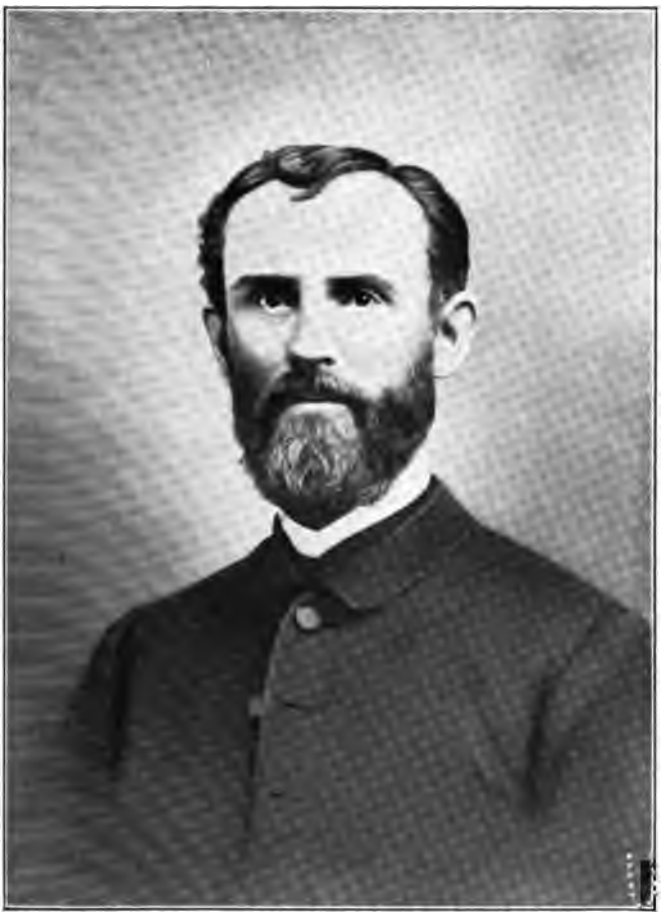
He attended the West Virginia Baptist State Association and while there he preached on Sunday morning. In company with a large group of ministers he spent that night in one of the homes of the city where two of the ministers began an argument over the question as to whether animals had any mind or not.

"They do have minds" said Mr. Solomon "and I can prove it. A friend of mine had a pet crow which, like all crows, would steal things and hide them away. It soon learned to watch and see if any one was looking before it committed a theft and when caught it would show in its face signs of remorse." Dr. Hatcher, who up to this time had said nothing remarked: "Brother Solomon, that is most remarkable. Does it not only prove that the crow has an intellectual but also a moral nature,—a conscience and that he is a sinner and ought to have the gospel preached to him." At that Mr. Solomon flew into a rage and said: "I did not mean to turn this discussion into ridicule" "Oh, No" replied Dr. Hatcher "Neither did I.

Digitized by Google

Let me tell you of a very religious dog which a friend of mine owned. This dog was a regular attendant at church and seemed to enjoy religious services very much. There was an old deacon in that church, however, who had no sympathy with the canine species and turned the devout dog out. One morning, this dog, which had been driven from the sanctuary, sat on the door steps looking into the church most wistfully showing evident signs of religious persecution in its face; but he kept one eye on the deacon and one eye on his master until the deacon became absorbed in the sermon and then he slipped in quietly and sat down by his master and enjoyed the worship. At the close of the sermon the pastor called on the deacon to pray and the dog jumped up and indignantly walked out."

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

1872-1875

THE MEMORIAL MOVEMENT. THE AMBULANCE CORPS. UNCLE SANTA'S VISIT. THE BOYS' MEETING.

In 1872 the Virginia Baptists inaugurated a memorable movement. Their College at Richmond had been almost wrecked by the war and it was decided to wage a campaign through the state for raising $100,000—a vast sum in those days—for the relief of the College. Dr. Hatcher sprang into the undertaking with the fire and dash of a school boy, and went from point to point through the state. "It was one of the most electric and resistless movements that the eyes of Virginia Baptists had ever seen," he writes. "Dr. J. L. Burrows, one of our imperial chieftains, was put at the head of the forces and with boundless energy and never wavering courage he led us. . . .We of the pastorate and some of the spell binders of the pew got up mighty speeches and we fairly shook the state." His church gave him to the memorial campaign from November until the following June, Sundays excepted. "Dr. Hatcher of Petersburg" said a secular paper "poured forth one solemn storm of eloquence at the Portsmouth Association." In his swing around the state he encountered varied experiences. One of them not only had its amusing side, but it showed his skill in handling an obdurate old citizen who was in his audience:

"I was engaged to present the college matter to a prominent country church in Tidewater Virginia. News came that a certain brother, usually most friendly with me, was nursing a well-articulated grudge against the college and might take it

Digitized by Google

out on me when I came for the collection. When I alighted at the front of the church I saw this brother standing apart, gloom and battle clouding his visage. I went out of my way to greet him and got the chill of the graveyard as my reward. I almost felt the point of his rapier in my flesh, but I had business ahead, and went on into the church. He entered the house also, and by every step and attitude proclaimed himself a wofully abused and wretched man. He took his seat near the pulpit and maliciously turned his back on me. I saw pain in the face of the saints and a wanton grin among the Gentiles. My address that morning touched Baptist history and doctrine. It was full of interest to the great bulk of Baptist people present. My irate brother, who had turned his back to me, faced the congregation and could see that his feeling was not shared by others. He was quite a pronounced Baptist, and now and then some strain of my talk would stir him and he would peep around without thinking. Others marked it and smiled, and then he would draw back and resume his defiant air. It went on as an odd by-play until I threw out some fragment of truth quite agreeable to him. He listened eagerly and, glancing around, saw several brethren in tears. Instantly he broke into weeping and suddenly wheeling about, he faced me the rest of the time and looked as if newly converted, as I verily believe he was. The atmospheric sentiment of the congregation dissolved his antagonisms and brought him in. At the close of the sermon he gave a handsome offering for the college fund. Moreover, he went to the great memorial meeting in 1873 in Richmond as a delegate, and the following September entered his son in Richmond College as a student. There was a conquering and assimilating spirit in that glorious campaign."

An imperial service was held at the College in connection with the campaign. It was called the Memorial Service in memory of the heroic Baptist forefathers who had not only made possible the College, but in the Colonial days had founded the Denomination in the state. From all over Virginia came the Baptist ministers and laymen and the exercises were held on the College campus where seats had been temporarily constructed for the multitude. Virginia Baptists have seldom witnessed such a day as that. Dr. J. L. M. Curry, was the

Digitized by Google

orator and Dr Hatcher writes a description of the occasion and his words show the ardor and fire with which his own soul was burning. It was characteristic of him to dedicate his whole heart to an enterprise when once he had championed it and on that Memorial Day no one was more sympathetic or enthusiastic than he. His portrait of Dr. Curry reflects his own spirit. "The rusty old lock," which he mentions, came from the Culpeper Jail where James Ireland, a heroic Baptist preacher, had been imprisoned for his faith in the Colonial days. But let him paint the picture:

"Curry was in his prime then—in person kingly and beautiful. His hair was barely touched with silver as it rioted over his brow. His voice, in spite of cruel misuse, was mighty as a warrior's trumpet and with all thought of politics out of him in those days, he was instinct with high religious convictions and loaded with a mighty message for the Baptist brotherhood massed before him in such multitude on that high day.

"Ah, how he towered as he told it. It had a rich, a gladsome sound. There was no note in it at all ajar. The people did about everthing that was allowable on such an occasion to express their pride and rapture. They sometimes laughed, sometimes cried, sometimes spoke in their uncontrollable excitement, sometimes burst into fragmentary praises, or ejaculatory prayers, sometimes grasped hands and swapped fellowship without ceremony and sometimes they seemed to do all these things, and several others besides, all at the same time.

"When Dr. Curry drew out the rusty old lock of Ireland's palace at Culpeper (as the famous old minister called his prison) and turned its key until its grating note smote the public ear I thought the tent would have to go. A crisis was at hand—the crowd stood up in forgetful intensity and surged and cried and fairly melted under the orator's peroration. The Baptists were enjoying their independence that day. They had a new taste of liberty and life was at high tide.

"It would warm the old hearts to call the roll of those who were on hand that day. The chiefs of the tribes were on hand."

That Memorial campaign marked the dawning of a new career for Richmond College and today she stands unsurpassed among

Digitized by Google

the Colleges of the South. He held revival meetings in the Fall at the Second Church in Richmond and afterwards wrote the following chatty letter to Dr. J. A. Chambliss who had been pastor of that same Second Church:

"Dec. 23rd, 1873.

"Why, my dear Cham:

"Howdy! How do you do? How is Mrs. Cham? Little Chams, all well? Any new Chams at your house? Certainly am proud to meet you. You look as jolly as if folks had been sending you Christmas gobblers, fruit cake and cigars.

"Have been thinking of you very often of late. Couldn't help it. Been assisting in a meeting at the Second Church in Richmond and to save my life I couldn't prevent them from saying all manner of pretty things about you. When the sisters undertook to regale me with a first class compliment they would say: 'You remind us so much of Mr. Chambliss.' I slyly intimated to them that the comparison was not flattering to me—which caused them to roll their eyes and wonder if insanity ran in my family.

"Hospitality flung open the front gate and gave me the fat of the land. I fear that I grew far faster in gout than in grace during my four weeks stay over there. The brethren who pull ————'s ears as a mere pastime did not cross me. Old man ———— ventured on one solitary occasion to try the lancet of his asthmatic satire on me. In anticipation of such an event I had laid in a double charge of hot shot. He fled at the first fire, but I pursued and captured him and from that time he was my most willing slave.

"Owing to an accumulation of visiting brethren in my study I have written not quite as dignified and interesting a letter as I had had it in my bosom to write.

"Yours

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

It was during his Petersburg pastorate that he and a few other young pastors formed a device for reducing the conceit of the self assertive preachers at the Southern Baptist Convention. It came about in this way. The President of the Convention, Dr. P. H. Mell, was a parliamentary specialist. It was his book on parliamentary tactics by which the Con-

Digitized by Google

vention was governed and he of course had every item of the rules at his fingers' ends, and it meant the day of doom for the man who clashed with him on a "point of order."

But there were those who rashly encountered him on the floor of the Convention, men who thought that they knew parliamentary law as well as Dr. Mell and that, as for Dr. Mell "the shrewd and overbearing maker of the new parliamentary tactics, they could give him lessons and a good start and then leave him in the lurch in a fair fight." These conflicts between the parliamentary champion and his opponents often took place on the floor of the Convention and in nearly every case "the brother on the floor" would be ruled "out of order" by the president, and would drop into his seat a crumpled and defeated contestant. "A few of us of the younger set" says Dr. Hatcher "were observers of the pretty little collisions." It occured to this little coterie, of which Dr. Hatcher seemed to be the founder and leader, that an Ambulance Corps ought to be provided to take care of those who were unhorsed and wounded in their conflicts with the parliamentary president "and so" says Dr. Hatcher "we organized a Society for the "Amelioration of the Squashed and Squelched". Of course the squashed and squelched were those who had encountered the master of tactics on the parliamentary field and had fallen beneath the strokes of his spear. It became gradually known that this "Ambulance Corps" kept their eye ever on the field of battle and were ready to rush to the aid (?) of any one who should be "knocked down" or worsted in any of his appearances before the Convention. For example, at one of the sessions a delegate told the members of the Corps that their method was brilliant. He joked about their "taking down" the self inflated preacher and congratulated them on the good work they were doing.

"We accepted his congratulations with lofty reserve" says Dr. Hatcher "rebuking him for treating a matter so grave in a fashion so trivial and told him that he ought to consider himself lest he also be crushed beneath the wheels of the

Digitized by Google

parliamentary engine. He laughed defiance in our faces and declared that he would never be found among the victims."

They came to the last day of the Convention and Dr. Hatcher and another member of the Corps found themselves sitting behind this same self confident brother, who arose and said, in substance:

"Brother Moderator I desire to offer a resolution to the effect that the thanks of this Convention be returned to the railroads and steamboats for reduced fares in the transportation of delegates of this Convention."

"The brother will reduce his resolution to writing" commanded the president. Down the brother sat and went to work on his resolution feeling at the same time that he ought to have written his resolution before offering it. But that was merely a skin scratch compared with the blow that came from a delegate who arose and said:

"Brother Moderator, that resolution is proper enough in its place but while I regard a railroad as one of the great blessings of the age and I think a steamboat is a joy forever yet I doubt whether the railroad or the steamboat could appreciate a vote of thanks from this Convention."

"It hit the author of the resolution" says Dr. Hatcher "somewhere in the region of the solar plexus."

"Put him down and send an order to the Ambulance Corps:" whispered the president of the Corps to the secretary. "What is that you said?" asked the perturbed brother who turned around with his question to the two officials of the Corps. In a very haughty and almost tragical manner the president of the "Corps" replied:

"I must very reluctantly inform you that the secretary was ordered to put you down."

"Put me down where?" he protestingly asked. "There is nothing the matter with me. I am not hurt." In a slow, deliberate manner the officials said to him: "We advise you

Digitized by Google

not to talk for there are some very serious symptoms in your case. We have already ordered the Ambulance Corps to take you in charge."

"His frankness was admirable" says Dr. Hatcher "He stated that it would stick to him forever if it went abroad that he had made a fool of himself and had fallen into the hands of the Amelioration Corps. It was said that he never got on his feet after that, though he attended the Convention for years afterwards."

Ludicrous experiences attended the labors of this group of salvage benefactors and without doubt they caused many a "swelling aspirant" to think twice before jumping to his feet. The dread of becoming a passenger in the Ambulance wagon prevailed widely among the delegates.

"There were really no officers and no organization" says Dr. Hatcher. "There were not more than five or six young men in any way connected with it. . . . It was an "intangible and unlocated Association. It was understood that when any one of us was assailed we could simply hold still, if we preferred or we could assume any relation to the movement that we desired". This "odd and unscheduled" Society played its part for five years and then, after serving its purpose, it was said to have dissolved,—or rather it would have dissolved but for the fact that it did not have sufficient coherency to permit a dissolution. It had done its work, the secretary was discharged and they met no more.

In one of the meetings of his Petersburg church during his absence on one occasion a prominent member arose and said regarding the heavy financial burden then resting upon the church: "I do not know what we will do unless we get a cheaper pastor." When on his return, he heard of this public remark made in his absence it struck him a keen blow and made him indignant and he immediately said to his church, that if brother ————'s remarks reflected the sentiment of the church his

Digitized by Google

resignation was ready to be put in their hands. This brought the church quickly to its feet to repudiate the view expressed by the brother and to assure him of their loyalty and thus what threatened to become a storm passed off as a mere ripple and the stream of church work flowed peacefully along.

One morning, while I was walking through the upstairs hall, I met my father who said to me—almost in a whisper——"You have another sister."

It startled me, but it gradually came to my understanding that little Kate Jeter had arrived and that she had taken her name from Mrs. Dr. Jeter, whom we called "Cousin Kate." Two other daughters had been born to him,—Virginia Mabel in Baltimore and Orie Latham in Petersburg—and a few months before his departure from Petersburg, a second son was born,—David Steel.

Already his love of games was manifesting itself. Often would he play croquet in the yard of Dr. Hartman, and of the Robertsons, and in our home dominoes was very popular with him. I remember playing with him one night until one o'clock—in the wee small hours—and in every game he was eager to beat.

Christmas was a time of jollification at our house and he was always the Magna Pars in its festivities. He arranged with Santa Claus to reach our home on Christmas Eve and we children noticed particularly that he and Santa seemed to be on extra good terms with each other. At the approach of Christmas he would always get for us some immense paper bags,—My! how big they seemed! These bags were to hold the presents from Uncle Santa. They would be opened wide and set up in a row against the wall in the front hall where the old gentleman from the Polar regions easily could see them when he entered the front door. Into these bags he would empty the presents for the children.

How happy father was in it all as he arranged the bags and got us ready for the anticipated arrival of Uncle Santa at eight o'clock that night. A short while before eight we would

Digitized by Google

be rounded up in the front parlor and given solemn warnings about our quiet behavior while old Santa was filling the bags in the hall. What jumping around and what rattling, gleeful chatter we had as we waited in the parlor for the wonderful arrival!

"What was that at the door?"—Ah, it was the front door bell and our hearts stopped still.

"There he is—Uncle Santa!" said father to us. "Now perfect quiet and let each one remain right here and I will go out and meet the old gentleman."

"Ah, but didn't we hold open our ears to listen, though we could hardly hold our hearts from jumping on the outside of us. We could hear father open the door and then say in loud cheery tones: "Why Uncle Santa; how are you? Do walk right in; a thousand welcomes to you." Of course we did not see Uncle Santa. It would have meant untold woes and disasters for us if we had looked through that key hole. But we heard him plainly as he talked in a high-pitched, thin voice. It is true that the voice at one or two, places, when it would drop down, sounded just a little wee bit like father's voice but of course we could not expect Uncle Santa's voice to be entirely unlike every other voice in the world. In a high, thin voice Uncle Santa would say, panting a little as if he was out of breath:" "Well, I thought once I might not get here—so many places—so many young ones. And how are the children?" My! how we did jump and tremble when he asked that.

"Are they all well?" "Oh yes" said the father "they are in tip top health.'

"And how have they behaved since I was here last Christmas?"—What a fearful question—we thought.

"Oh they are fine children Uncle Santa; they are too noisy sometimes and sometimes they jump the track of good behavior but I think they are sorry and are going to try to rub out and start afresh and I think Santa that they are about the finest children on the globe."

"Ah, that is good news" he said "and here are some things

Digitized by Google

I have brought with me all the way from the frozen land of icicles and they are for the children—(Violent heart jumpings in the parlor).

"Here are the things for Eldridge"—(roaring cataracts and internal convulsions of the first born in the parlor). Father called out:

"Here is Eldridge's bag, Uncle Santa."

"Here are the presents for May"—said Santa (another mighty commotion).

"Right here is her bag, Uncle Santa—how kind it is in you to bring these beautiful things from the far away land of blizzards."

"These are for Orie" said Uncle Santa—(Excitement in the parlor impossible of suppression.)

"Here is the bag for Orie" called out father.

"And now lets see—there is another—Yes, yes, here it is—for Kate and it goes into this bag I suppose"—(conditions in the parlor worse than ever) "But I must be going; thousands of homes are still waiting for me."

"I wish you could stay with us Uncle Santa,"

"Impossible! Give my love to the children and tell them that if they want to see me next Christmas they must be the best children on the deck." Uncle Santa hurried away: we know he did for did we not hear the door open and then shut with a bang,—but that was all we did hear for the parlor door was then flung wide open and such scampering for those bags and such eager diving in to their contents and such happy shouts over the discoveries—and the happiest one in the entire party was the father—who evidently believed with the children:

"At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

We find him next making a dash into South Carolina visiting Charleston where he delivered two sermons and a lecture. "You know it was a treat" said a writer in the Herald, "Every-

Digitized by Google

body knows it who has ever met Hatcher." After speaking of the "matchless" sermon on Gideon he continued:

"Monday night he delivered his famous lecture on 'The Advantages of the Modern Dance.' The house was crowded and such a time as we had. I am sure he never delivered that lecture with more perfect success. He spoke fully for an hour and a half—but apparently everybody was willing to sit another hour if he would only keep on with his irresistibly humorous though 'squelching' satire. But socially also, the visit of my friend and brother was a joy to be tasted through many a day to come. And not only for me, but—witness the number of bouquets and souvenirs of different kinds with delicate cards attached which came to his address!"

Very few manuscripts remain of the sermons which he preached in Petersburg. The following are some of these few which have been preserved.

Jan. 4th, 1874—"Building Altars for God." 2 Sam.24:25.

Feb. 1st,1874—"Bowing in the House of Rimmon." 2 Kings 5:18.

March 2nd, 1874—"Bringing the Paralytic to Jesus."Mark 2:3.

Nov. 28th, 1874—"Eating at the King's Table." 2 Sam. 9: 7, 8.

Nov. 28th, 1874—"Paul's Vision at Corinth." Acts 18:9,10.

Jan. 10th, 1875—"False Piety". 1 Sam. 15:13,14.

Jan. 10th, 1875—"David and Goliath." 1 Sam 17:37.

Jan. 15th, 1875—"Nathan's Reproof of David." 2 Sam 12:7.

Jan. 31, 1875—"The Gentle Conqueror." Matt. 12:20.

The Petersburg climate played havoc with his health in the Summer of 1874 and he was ordered off to the Springs. He went to the White Sulphur Springs. Col. George L. Peyton, the proprietor of the Springs was exceedingly fond of him and frequently urged him to visit the Springs as his guest.

He and his wife in December celebrated the tenth anniversary of their marriage by having at their home a "Tin Wedding." Heaps and loads of tin were brought into the house on that

Digitized by Google

occasion. One of the ladies sent Mrs. Hatcher a silk dress of the color of tin to wear at the wedding. The children were very happy over the big tin barrel which was packed with cut loaf sugar. It was tin in the front parlor and tin in the back parlor; tin in the hall and tin in the dining room; tin to the left of us and tin to the right of us,—tin, tin piled everywhere,—even the Catholic priest being one of the tin bearers and many were the months that sped by before the last remnant of that avalanche of tin was obliterated from our home.

He had his Boys Meetings every Sunday afternoon in which he made large use of "Dialogues". The dialogues were written by himself. They were breezy in style, serious as well as humorous, and treated of live subjects. The boys were trained by him. I remember one day that a message came from him in Richmond for his dialogue boys to be sent over to Richmond at once,—that they were to give an evening's entertainment at the First Baptist Church. What a panic of delight we were thrown into by the announcement! What hurrying on of Sunday clothes and what jubilant expectancy was ours as we set out for Richmond. It was a State Sunday School Association and Dr. Hatcher had been asked to take charge of the Friday evening's programme and he decided to bring "his boys" over for the occasion.

No time was given us in Petersburg that day for brushing up on our pieces for we scarcely had time to brush up our hair or our clothes. We received the hurried message and had to jump for the train in what seemed to me a very short time but probably the exhilaration of that trip gave double quickness to our memories and put us on our mettle. At any rate there was no break down in our Richmond performances, or if such there was, history has mercifully left it out. The church was filled to overflowing and we came back to Petersburg to tell of "the trip of our lives."

A few weeks later I noticed a strange occurrence in the church service one Sunday morning. The congregation seemed to be attacked with an epidemic of weeping. I understood it not,

Digitized by Google

but later, out in the church yard, one of the gentlemen said to me—possibly in reply to my enquiry regarding the red and tearful eyes—"Your father is going to leave Petersburg. He has accepted a call to Richmond."

His Petersburg pastorate had been eminently prosperous and the devotion of the membership to him had never been greater than at that time but when the door swung open to the larger pastorate in the Capital city—that of the Grace Street Baptist Church—he felt that there he must do his next work. When his name was being considered by the Grace Street Church committee Dr. Jeter in speaking about him said to them: "He will never make a flash in the pan."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

1875-1876.

RICHMOND. RICHMOND COLLEGE ADDRESS. BOYS' MEETING. DIALOGUES.

His removal to Richmond lifted his ministry to a higher and broader platform, Richmond, at that time, being the chief city of the South. His first sermon in his new field was preached on the last Sunday in May. The location of the church was ideal, though the structure was old and without many conveniences.

He tells how he came to be called to Grace Street:

"I came to this church under peculiar circumstances. My predecessor had resigned some time before under factional pressure and his resignation had been accepted. There was, however, an ill-suppressed mutter of discontent as to the situation and when the committee appointed to recommend a pastor brought in my name my predecessor was nominated also by a member of the church and when the vote came I was ingloriously left in the lurch; but the pastor re-elect felt constrained to decline the call and my name was presented again and I received all the votes except one. The lonely voter was one of the regenerated oddities of the human race."

He then tells how this recalcitrant brother gradually came to be his lover and champion. This factional element was in the church when he came but they seemed friendly to him and joined with the other members in giving him a bright, royal welcome.

Immediately after entering upon his work at Grace Street he found himself in such feeble health that he had to betake himself to the mountains. This was a great disappointment

Digitized by Google

GRACE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

to him. He had left Petersburg with malaria in his system and it threatened to put him hors de combat. Before leaving for the springs he showed his platform skill in a very playful and popular address at the Richmond College Commencement.

"First of all" says the Herald in reporting the address "he congratulated the students, one and all, upon their spotless and irreproachable conduct during the last nine months. They had not broken a rule, nor uttered an evil word, nor marked a wall, nor rung a bell, nor joined in a callathump, nor tortured a gawky new-comer, nor ducked a professor, nor cheated at an examination, nor invaded a strawberry garden, nor had been out at night, nor had had imaginary headaches, nor borrowed money, nor written poetry, nor done any other ill-mannered, or immoral thing. He said that they had not done these things—at least, he had not heard of their doing them. True, he had not interviewed the faculty on the subject for he thought his congratulations could be as cordial and unqualified without such interview. And even if some busy and venomous tongue had whispered of irregularities and errors he could hardly believe the rumor, after gazing at them that night, looking so erect and serene, so innocent and lovely, so strong and happy. But even if some of them had yielded to the temptation he still congratulated them that they had gone no further astray and that they would now have opportunity to gather their scattered virtues and fortify against the dangers of next session.

"In the next place, he congratulated them all on the result of the examinations, no matter what the results had been. To the successful he spoke earnest words of approval, but exhorted them not to imagine that they now had the world in a sling and that the sun would cease to shine if they were suddenly to die.

"Some of them had failed through their own fault, and he congratulated them that they had no honors which they did not deserve and which would prove hurtful if thus bestowed. But he made to this class an exhortation so practical that we give it in full:

" 'Do the correct thing about your failure. Don't try to whitewash the case. Don't administer chloroform to your father or mother. Don't say you were sick. Don't say you had too many tickets. Don't lay it on the professors. Don't call

Digitized by Google

it a misfortune. Above all, don't ascribe it to your genius, and sneer at your more successful comrades. There was no genius in it except the evil genius of indifference. Tell how it was—tell that it was the resistless fascination of Richmond girls—tell that you spent too much time in airing your best clothes on Grace and Franklin Street—tell how you were too fond of Dickens, or baseball, or whatever it was. If you have pluck and vim to do better next session, ask your father to give you another chance and come back in September and next June you will be here to share the honors of your Alma Mater. But if you really lack the energy and purpose for a new start in a vigorous pace—if failure cleaves to your bones—then give my compliments to your honored and unhappy father, and tell him that my advice to him is to buy one of P. H. Starke's new improved plows and elect you president of it."

"The speaker then spoke words of earnest sympathy and good cheer to those who had failed through no fault of their own and said:

" 'God bless you, my boy I recall my ill-chosen word. You have not failed. You missed the distinction, but you got the discipline. Life is always short, but long enough for a steady resolute spirit to win success. I congratulate you that there is an open track before you and your past experience will enable you to run it.'

"He then congratulated the students, in appropriate words, on the close of the session and their return to their homes and gave them some facetious counsel about their country sweethearts and as his address, he said, would be incomplete without some grave advice, he concluded with these three points:

" '1. Don't be in too great a hurry to get married.

" '2 Work for the College. She is your mother. She is not perfect but it is not for a son to tell a mother's faults.

" '3. Be men,

"The above, meagre outline gives some imperfect idea of Dr. Hatcher's admirable address. His blended humor, wit, satire and pathos brought down the house in loud applause and delighted the audience who pronounced it a splendid specimen of a College speech."

He decided to accept the hospitality of Col. George Peyton, the big souled and fun loving proprietor of the White Sulphur Springs, where he had enjoyed a visit on the preceding Summer.

Digitized by Google

His arrival at the Springs on this Summer was enlivened by a humorous incident of his own devising. It dated back to the previous Summer when he was at these Springs and when the resident physician of the Springs, Dr. M————, boasted often to Dr. Hatcher and Col. Peyton of his ability to remember faces: "In fact" said Dr. M———— "I never forget a face." They spent many hours in happy chat and the Doctor did not fail at different times to ring the changes on his unfailing talent for recognizing old acquaintances. That was in the Summer of 1874.

On the next Summer when Dr. Hatcher arrived at the Springs he was given a cordial greeting by Col. Peyton.

"How is our friend Dr. M————?" asked Dr. Hatcher.

"Unusually well" replied the Colonel "and it will do him good to meet you again."

"Is he still recognizing old acquaintances?" The Colonel broke into a laugh as he said: "Ah you remember that do you? Well he surely will not dare not to recognize you after his boasting of last Summer."

"Suppose, Colonel, we put our heads together and put the old gentlemen to a good test." said Dr. Hatcher. After a brief council of war the plot was laid. Dr. Hatcher was bundled up in a big overcoat, the large collar was turned up and pulled around the ears and mouth and the slouch hat pulled down well over the forehead. Slowly they walked over to the old Doctor's office.

"Come in gentlemen" he called out as he opened his door. "How are you Colonel Peyton; have a chair."

"Doctor" said the Colonel "Here is a friend of mine—(Great coughing and clearing of throat on the part of the closely buttoned up friend)—a friend of mine, Major John Cutting from Arkansas who seems to be much afflicted with some trouble" —(continued and increasing coughing by the friend as if it was accompanied with great pain.)

"Oh, is that so?" said the Doctor somewhat nervously; "Too bad. What seems to be your trouble, Major—what did you say the name was Colonel?

"Major Cutting." "Oh, yes, pardon me Major; I cannot always remember names, but a face I never forget, never."

Digitized by Google

(Violent coughing on the part of the Major as he ventured to speak)—"Eh—Doc-tor-I-de—(coughing) You see (coughing) —my condition Doctor—eh—eh what do you think of me?"

"Doctor," spoke up the Colonel, "I think I'll ask you to pause just one moment; I want to introduce an old friend to you—I want you to meet our old friend" and here the patient straightened up, the coat collar was turned down and the hat lifted—"Dr. William E. Hatcher."

He returned from the Springs strong and eager for the work in his new pastorate. The presence of Dr. J. B. Jeter in his church was worth to him scores of ordinary members. He always sat in the middle aisle not far from the front.

"He rarely ever failed to be present at both services on Sunday and at the prayer meeting on Wednesday night unless on duty somewhere else. He was a magnificent hearer open eyed, upright and eager. His smile, his glistening eyes, his unconscious bows, his falling tears and beating breast were signals of cheer and support."

As in Petersburg, so in Richmond, he seemed to feel that his pastorate would not be properly launched until a great revival had come upon the church. He prayed and worked towards that end and in November the meetings began and for ten weeks they continued with the pastor doing the preaching. The wonderful nature of the meetings is seen from the following statement from Dr. Jeter in the Herald: "In a forty years residence in the city, though we have known more general revivals, we have not seen a more pervasive and powerful work of grace in any one congregation. . . It is fair to estimate that 250 persons have made a profession of repentance."

His Boys' Meeting soon began to loom into large proportions. These meetings were not only entertaining and instructive for the boys, but the boys were enlisted in raising money for church improvements. It was in Richmond, he said, that his work with the boys "rose to its full height . . . I had found my inheritance at last—banks and tides and storms of

Digitized by Google

boys." Who of all the boys that attended those meetings can ever forget them? No sooner was the Sunday dinner eaten than off to the church would dash the boys. In front of the church door they gathered and surged in happy chatter until the arrival of the pastor who usually came up with a squad that had accumulated around him as he came down the street. The door was opened and in they scampered, piling into the benches in lively clatter and taking unlimited time in getting settled in their seats. What bustle and life was there! The air seemed vibrant with energy. How the boys did sing and what eager-eyed attention they gave to whoever got on the platform,—that is provided he put in his speech gumption and snap. The boys could not be kept from the meetings. Attractive though their homes might be yet on Sunday afternoon there was a magnet that pulled them out of their homes and around to Grace Street.

Playmates might whistle at their front gates or ring their door bells for a visit on Sunday afternoon but these youthful callers were either wheeled into line for Grace Street Church, or else the visit was sidetracked for another occasion. That Boy's meeting was the bright particular spot for them after dinner on Sunday.

"The mothers said that they could hardly hold the boys until they got their dinner and that, you know, is a well nigh incredible thing to say about a normal boy" writes Dr. Hatcher.

There was an organist and a chorister to lead the boys in their singing and it was roaring music that they would have. Sometimes there were solos by popular visiting singers. Oftimes the boys gave solos or duets or quartettes. Speakers innumerable—many of them distinguished—were mustered into service for a speech to the boys.

A prominent educator,—a Methodist—said recently "I am one of Dr. Hatcher's boys. My mother did not know what to do with me on Sunday afternoons. Our neighbor's son asked

Digitized by Google

me to go with him to Grace Street. I went and continued to go for three years. I love the memory of Dr. Hatcher."

In many parts of the world to-day are ministers whose hearts kindle at the recollection of those meetings. For example Rev. T. V. McCall says:

"Somehow I feel that of all the boys who came under Dr. Hatcher's influence in old Grace Street Church I must have profited most. He trained me in the Boys Meeting."

Of course he sought to put spice and sparkle in the meetings. There was a freedom and spontaneity in the exercises, and often a ripple of fun would break over the proceedings, though irreverence, or unseemly levity was never permitted. For example one afternoon one of the boys—Jeter Jones—when the roll had been called, said: "Dr. Hatcher we have exactly 99 boys present. If we had only one more boy we would have one hundred."

"Here is Clarkson" said Dr. Hatcher as he pointed to a lad of great altitude. If we will cut him in two we will have the one hundred. A storm of laughter broke upon the boys as they looked at Clarkson and yet the bantering of Clarkson was in such jovial, kindly vein that he joined in the joke and laughed with the others.

He trained them in raising money, one of their methods being that of securing honorary members, each of whom should pay ten cents per month.

The boys were drilled in public speaking and once a year they would have their public anniversary in the church auditorium. The boys would be in full charge of the programme,—one acting as presiding officer, another delivering the address of welcome and many of them taking part in the dialogues, Dr. Hatcher having written all the pieces and having trained the boys. It was said that these celebrations by the boys unearthed many members who had not been at church for a long time and whom nothing else could attract. At one of these celebrations a boy came out on the platform, advanced to the front, started to make his bow, when he stepped back and looked

Digitized by Google

around in a dazed fashion. Another boy approached him and demanded to know why he was standing there looking so scared.

"You'd be scared too" he replied "if you saw ghosts in the audience as I do. I see members of the church here tonight who I thought had been dead for years and yet here they are tonight."

One of these "ghost" members, upon meeting him one day said: "Dr. Hatcher, I do not like the outside of our church."

"Yes" he replied "and you dont seem to like the inside either."

Let us, in imagination, look in upon one of these annual celebrations by the boys. The building was usually crammed with people,—on the floor and in the galleries. At the appointed moment out steps a boy upon the high, broad pulpit platform, and in loud tones calls out:

"Ladies and gentlemen": and then follows a five minutes Address of Welcome after which he announces, "The next item on the programme is a dialogue on 'What we are going to be' by George, Leon, James, Jeter and others.'"

He steps back to his seat at the rear of the pulpit while every eye is fixed on the side door. Out comes "George" who moves to the front of the platform saying with a shout: "Hurrah for me! I feel as happy as Julius Caesar!"

"You do?" said another boy who had come on the platform from the other door; "You make such a racket I thought you had swallowed a cyclone and it was trying to work out at your mouth."

George—"Well, I am rather noisy tonight, but I cant help it. I feel happy in my bones. A big thing happened at our house to-day."

Leon—"What was it? Did your mother whip your father; or did you have scalloped monkey for dinner?"

George—"Father informed me that I might quit school and go to work. Aint that glorious?"

Digitized by Google

Enter James

James—"What do you mean? Are you going to give up your chance for an education? You are a very slim pattern for a business man. What are you going to be?"

Enter Jeter

Jeter—"Going to be? I tell you what I am going to be; I am going to be a doctor."

George.—"A doctor! I wouldn't be any doctor, forever looking in folk's mouths, cutting open boils, smelling measles, getting up all times of night, and may-be killing people. I am going to be a merchant, and keep ready-made clothes."

Leon.—"You say you are? I hope you will sew the buttons on your clothes so they won't drop off the first time you sneeze. It seems to me that the ready-made clothes sold in this town were taken off some old mummy, for they are rotten and ready to come to pieces."

James.—"I wouldn't be any merchant—specially dry-goods merchant—bothering with smirking, grinning clerks, and tormented by those street-walking women who spend their time in looking at things they have not got any money to buy. I shall hang out my shingle as a lawyer."

George.—"Lawyer, indeed! I scorn the very idea of being a lawyer. It gives me a swimming in the head to see one of these little petty-fogging jack-legs strutting along the street as if the sun and stars belonged to him. I always feel as if he was hoping that I would steal a sheep or rob a bank so he could have a chance to make some money out of me."

Enter Tom.

Jeter.—"Come in, brother, we are talking about what we are going to be."

Tom.—"What you are going to be? I think I will be a carpenter and build houses."

James.—"You wouldn't catch me being a carpenter—mashing my thumb-nails, falling off scaffolds, quarreling with plasterers and painters, worried by ladies about hanging doors and mending gates, and being abused all the time about not finishing houses in the time promised."

Leon.—"It seems to me boys that this is a very important question as to what we are going to be."

Digitized by Google

And thus the dialogue proceeds. Nat swings the dialogue around to the truth that the first thing for a boy to decide to be is that he will be a man, a useful christian man and that his business, whatever it may be, should be managed for the glory of God.

The rehearsals for the dialogues were signally interesting. Dr. Hatcher would have the boys come to his study, or his house and he would seek to pummel them into shape. Some would talk too fast and some too slow: some too loud and far more, too low. His corrections and criticisms were made with a pleasant badinage and, through it all, the boys and Dr. Hatcher had happy times together. On one occasion there was a dialogue on "Speaking in Public" in which a boy,—right out on the platform before the audience—was taught how to make a speech. In this dialogue several boys met on the platform, and tried to induce one of their number to deliver an address to the audience. The boy refused to do so, but they belabored him with arguments in favor of his learning to speak in public and when he finally consented they set to work at once to teach him the following speech:

"You'd scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage.
And if I chance to fall below
Demosthenes and Cicero;
View me not with a critic's eye,
But pass my imperfections by."

They had a rough time making him say it. He would begin with: "You'd scarce suspect." He would say: "cricket's eye" instead of "critic's eye." Thus they kept at it until finally, when they had knocked him into shape, they marched him to the front of the platform; he made his bow and said his speech without a hitch. Of course such experiences with the boys gave the pastor a mighty grip on them. They were often invited to other churches to sing and to deliver their dialogues.

Digitized by Google

"It was estimated that during its life time over $10,000 passed through the treasury of their society and on one occasion the church finding itself in a strait borrowed quite a sum of money from the boys."

If the meetings were a fountain of life for him they were more than that for the boys. For twenty six years that Society was receiving into its embrace hundreds of boys, and inspiring them with its ennobling influences. But his love for boys burned in his heart not merely on Sunday afternoons but on every day and a large portion of his life was spent with some boy near at hand.

Many men have told of some word spoken by him that set the lights gleaming in their young life which never went out. "Perhaps, after all," writes Dr. Prestridge "his main service for God in the world has been the inspiration and help which he has given to large numbers of boys and young men."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

1876-1877

AMUSING PULPIT EXPERIENCES. HUMOR AND WIT.

He invites his royal friend, Dr. Thos. H. Pritchard of Raleigh N. C., to be his guest at the meeting in Richmond of the Southern Baptist Convention and he extends his invitation in the following, playful manner:

"RICHMOND, VA., April 11, 1876.

"MY DEAR THOMAS:

"I write for the compound purpose of saying that you are a scholar and several other things.

"I wish that I had the genius of Mr. Jno. G. Williams, the cheerfulness of Mrs. Lewis, the dignity of Mrs. Vass, the big house and yet bigger soul of Mrs. Heck, the financial sagacity of Captain Williamson and the fine clothes and universal rascality of ———, and then I would take all Raleigh as my guest at the Convention. But having nothing except my wife and children, my poverty and my debts, my pride and my sins, together with a small house and nothing to eat, I cannot do it. There is, however, for Raleigh's noble sake one thing that I would be glad to do—if "Barkis is willin"—and that is to share the reigning destitution of my obscure hovel with you during that meeting. It is a strain upon your friendship which I am ashamed to make and if you think the sacrifice too great I will excuse you—with a sob. To exist on half rations and eat out of a broken plate at such a time will be a trial to you and if you can do better then I say (with another sob) by all means do it.

"If however you would condescend to abate your metropolitan majesty to the extent of foraging on the borders of starvation and be willing to rest your refined corpus on a

Digitized by Google

bed of straw then you can say to your admiring friends that during the convention they can find you at 507 W. Grace Street.

"I count myself a small fish in these Richmond waters and in this I have the melancholy satisfaction of believing that I am not alone in my opinion. I wish you were here, but why should a minnow be ambitious to fill the river with horny heads. He might get himself swallowed.

"Eaton is booming in Petersburg still. He has a roaring meeting and is about to break his net in his heavy drags.

"N. B. Excuse my piscatorial illustrations. It is the season for shad.

"I have just come in from a fifty four miles buggy drive to Charles City county. I went to lecture at a country church and made $50.25; the church took just $50.25 of the money and gave me the rest.

"Yours, Wm. E. Hatcher."

He had an amusing experience with Dr. Pritchard in his Raleigh church.

"It occured at an old time revival meeting, with services held in the basement room, the pulpit consisted of a platform without rail and steps at each side, the interest was intense and the great room was crowded. The pastor, well rounded and big of soul, occupied a cane bottomed chair on the platform back of where I stood to speak. Having his chair slightly tilted and desiring to get a little nearer he let his chair down as he supposed on its front legs. Unluckily the outside leg missed the floor. Hearing a noise behind me I unconsciously turned just in time to see the preacher and the chair roll down the steps and land in a hopeless jumble on the floor. My first impulse, a very innocent one, was to break into laughter. By hard struggle I held in, which was more than was done by the congregation and especially by the preacher's wife for there was quite a ripple swept the audience. I was helped in restraining myself by the fact that a most venerable and even distinguished old gentleman sat with his elbow on the bench in front of me, his face resting in his hands which also contained his handkerchief. His solemn air and stately posture rebuked my impulse to laugh. I felt reverence for a man so far above the temptation which was so strong in me. All the

Digitized by Google

time however, a laugh was strong in him and after awhile, with his handkerchief crammed tight in his mouth and his dignity in total wreck, he broke into one of the most discordant, uproarious, uncontrollable peals of laughter that one would hear in a life time. Things had to have their way, though I laughed not.

"A real laugh may be imprisoned, but it will be heard from. I closed the sermon. Obtusely enough, I called on the pastor to pray. I knelt placing my face in my hand upon the seat of the pew. The agony of that moment will not be forgotten. I shut my lips and pressed them into my hands and prayed that I might die or hold in. With the Amen of the pastor I sprang to my feet, broke all records in the brevity of my benediction and had histerics for the first and only time in my life. I laughed straight through two hours and again and again during the night, I waked up with new convulsions."

He had another experience while preaching that sorely strained his risibilities. Dr. A. E. Dickinson was seated upon the pulpit at the time but sleep overcame the Doctor and his head fell somewhat backwards and he failed before dropping to sleep, to close his mouth, or perchance, it fell open after he had fallen asleep. Dr. Hatcher during his preaching, brought his hand down upon the pulpit and there it lay as he proceeded with his sermon,—at least he thought it still lay on the pulpit, but he had shifted his position—sidewise and very near to Dr. Dickinson. He decided to make a vigorous gesture; he lifted his hand high in the air with the purpose of bringing it down upon the pulpit in a big oratorical plunge. Down it came and landed—not upon the pulpit—but alas upon the open mouth of his slumbering neighbor on the platform. He said he felt distinctly the print of Dr. Dickinson's teeth.

When he was walking around the church that night after the service he encountered Dr. Dickinson who said to him with apparent and well justified ferociousness: "Look here Hatcher; you grand rascal, you came near knocking every tooth out of my mouth."

The fact must be mentioned that a shadow appeared at this time in his pastoral sky. The old faction in the church

Digitized by Google

which he had hoped had melted out of existence began to revive and lift up its head. He thus writes:

"I found in the church a faction.—a faction small, solid and fractious to the point of war. It was on the fence when I got there and lit on my side and sampled me, amply coddling and feasting and flattering me during the time. I put in all my arts in the way of conciliation and had enough stupid vanity to think that I was born for such a time as that but before I got through with it I almost wished that I had not been born at all."

He tells why the faction turned against him:

"They had certain cherished crochets which they desired my aid in transmuting into church laws and there were also certain influential members in the church who, in their judgment, were altogether too active in governmental matters. More than all I was gradually developing individual characteristics, lines of policies and committing business blunders that they felt it was of the utmost importance that they should supervise, correct or quietly exterminate.

"Soon the blast of their hostile trumpet gave forth its shriek. The war was on and for nearly ten years my feet trod the thorny path."

From this time forth he is to show his capacity for dealing with those who irritated, or opposed him. Out in the world's arena men who are ill-treated by others can either fight or leave their opponent to his fate, but a pastor with hostile members can neither fight nor ignore. He must be a kindly shepherd to the unfriendly and to the obstructionists.

The manuscript of a Commencement address which he delivered in June of this year, 1876, at the Albermarle Female Institute bears the marks of his thorough preparation. His subject was "The School girl at home." Only a few paragraphs of the speech can be quoted here:

"I knew a girl that went away to school for a session and when she returned she made all manner of fun of her freckled,

Digitized by Google

red-haired, farmer cousin and then when near the dark border line of thirty she married him.

"2. Let her avoid the affectation of learning. Pedantry in a young man is a trial and if I ever get hanged for deliberate murder it will be for killing in cold blood one of these literary upstarts who wears long hair, cultivates a pale brow, forgets to tie his shoes, puts on his coat wrong side out, reads German poetry in bed all night, talks in words of sesquipedalian longitude and is in short a born and incurable fool. To save my soul I can conceive of no design in his creation except to be the husband of a pedantic woman—the only punishment that is severe enough for him."

In closing he urged them to "throw the matchless drapery of piety around a trained mind and a busy and useful life."

At the meeting of the Baptist General Association in June he favored abolishing the Sunday School Board because he thought it was dead, but some thought differently and so he said in his speech: "I consider the Board dead, but to prove the fact unmistakably to those who think that it still has life I propose that we keep the body out until next June and then bury it." He seems to have been in a bright mood in the meetings for we read that in his speech on Ministerial Education "Dr. Hatcher went on to some length in veins of humor and happy hits which cannot be caught and put on paper" and that same month we read that at the Richmond College Commencement "Dr. W. E. Hatcher, in a speech full of wit and wisdom presented the Steel medal."

No delineation of his character is complete without a reference to his humor and wit. "Humor" says Carlyle "has been justly regarded as the finest perfection of poetic genius." This pays high tribute to humor but it does not define it. Lowell seems to speak truly when he says "humor is the perception of the incongruous." In other words the humorist is the man who sees things in their odd relations and shows them to others. Dr. Hatcher when asked regarding his own humor said:

"If there is anything in me that has to do with humor it can hardly be inherent and at best is nothing more than a very

Digitized by Google

limited capacity for discovering the humors of outside situations. There is no enginery within me for manufacturing humor and if it is at all proper to mention humor and me the same day, it must be because I have a scant and unlocated gift for discovering those conjunctions in human affairs which titulate the people and call forth their laughter. This I say not at all as an expert but as a man who does not live in sight of the humorous side of mundane affairs."

"The first time I ever saw Dr. Hatcher" says Rev. Peyton Little "I was sitting by him at the ———— Association near the front. A discussion had been dragging itself along and when the vote was called for two persons voted 'Aye' and one big fellow thundered out gruffly, 'No.' Dr. Hatcher turned to me, a boy sitting by him, and said 'Two eyes and one nose; and the nose bigger than the eyes.'

He eschewed stock jokes. His humor was born of the occasion and leaped from his lips apparently without effort on his part. "His spirit of fun and humor" says Dr. Charles Herndon" flowed with the abundance and refreshment of a clear sparkling spring" and Dr. Hudnall declared that it was "spontaneous, irrepressible and inexhaustible."

He had a horror of lugging in a joke simply that the joke might be put on dress parade or to advertize his skill as a joke maker. His humor was an after-thought, or an incident and often sprang upon the scene while he was intent on some important mission. He once wrote:

"I utterly abhor fun for fun's sake, except in dealing with children. To please them, to give them jolly surprises, to hear their rippling laughter, I have always been ready to sing a song, act a charade, play a prank or even crack a joke, but I fall out with myself utterly when I have been betrayed into exhibiting myself in a burlesquing or ludicrous way for grown up people. When I do intentionally make people laugh it is always with a serious purpose. If I have a collection to take and my crowd is restive, unresponsive or in any way hard to handle I may purposely bring on a laugh. Not, however, by a stock story, or any old expedient laid away for such purposes, but by some playful commentary on the immediate situation."

Digitized by Google

He was at a country church at a business meeting one day when the members were discussing the advisability of moving the church building out on the road.

There were two of the members who were violently opposed to the movement and with solemn wagging of their heads they declared "Brethren; I tell you, you had better not press this matter of moving this building. If you do I warn you it will split the church". Dr. Hatcher who was an interested visitor and friend of the church and who strongly favored moving the building arose and said:

"Brethren, Brother ——— and Brother ——— declare that the pressing of this matter will split the church. I think you need not be alarmed on that point. The fact is the devil has been trying to split this church for many years and all that he has ever been able to do has been to knock off a few splinters."

I gathered the idea in some way that his early reading of Dickens stimulated, or discovered for him to some extent, his humorous propensities. At any rate I know that he reveled in that author in his youthful days. His humor would break out in the social circle, in his public addresses and sometimes even in his sermons,—but always as incidental to the main proceeding. It would ripple and sparkle and, as related to the drift of his speech, it would seem inevitable. Truly has some one called humor the "saving sense", for by his use of it he saved many a situation—in public meetings and in the social circle—from disaster and it was his ability to see the bright and humorous side of situations that carried him through many a strain. The great writers seem fond of giving high praise to "humor". Coleridge declares that men of humor are always in some degree men of genius and Tennyson says:

"I dare not tell how high I rate humor, which is generally most fruitful in the highest and most solemn human spirits. Dante is full of it; Cervantes and almost all the greatest men have been

Digitized by Google

pregnant with this glorious power. You will find it even in the gospel of Christ,."

But with his humor was linked his wit. Wit seems to be strictly a product of the intellect while humor "issues not more from head than heart and issues not in laughter but in smiles." Dr. Sam Johnson declares that "wit is a discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." Humor perceives things in their odd relations. Wit brings to light things that are alike—but which to the superficial eye seem to have no likeness whatever. For example here are two objects, or ideas, lying visible to the casual eye and apparently with no similarity between them, when lo, a speaker with keen gaze looks underneath them, sees further down than the other observers and perceives some common and striking features binding them together and he flashes these resemblances upon the observer and he is called a wit. "Wit is the flower of the imagination" and truly it requires imagination to build up hidden resemblances and paint them so that others can easily see them. "Wit and humor" says Cervantes "belong to genius alone." Dr. Hatcher's wit would flash and sometimes would cut like a knife.

At one of the Conventions he began to take a collection for some worthy cause. A preacher interrupted him by calling out:

"Dr. Hatcher; I also have a very needy object for which an offering ought to be made. It is for the X————. I suggest that you combine that with yours and take the two together."

"I hardly think we had better attempt that now; let us finish one at a time" said Dr. Hatcher who then proceeded with his call for subscriptions. In a few minutes the brother called out again "Dr. Hatcher—I think we had better combine these two objects. If you will do this I will give five dollars and there are others around me who will do the same. Why not combine the two?" "I think we had better continue as we have started" said Dr. Hatcher and the collection made another start and was moving well when the irrepressible brother interrupted again.

Digitized by Google

"Dr. Hatcher, I think you are making a mistake. I feel sure you will get more—if—"

"Dr. Hatcher" called out a man "why don't you knock that fellow's brains out."

"I would if I only knew where to hit him" quickly replied Dr. Hatcher.

Some one has thus compared wit and humor: "Wit, bright, rapid and blasting as the lightning, flashes, strikes and vanishes in an instant; humor warm and all embracing as the sunshine bathes its objects in a general and abiding light."

It was in the social circle that his wit and humor found their most delightful expression. "I was present at a dinner" said Dr. P .T. Hale "in Richmond when the host became so convulsed with laughter at one of Dr. Hatcher's stories that he was compelled to leave the room, choking with uncontrollable merriment". His humorous stories, like his pulpit illustrations, were in nearly every case the recital of incidents in his own experience.

He was mortally afraid of being dubbed a fun maker. Even as a boy he had scant pity for the youth who in company sought to be funny. He once referred to those people who "are forever trying to say funny things. They load themselves with anecdotes. They study mimicry. They watch for the ludicrous side of things."

Dr. P. T. Hale says that at the Southern Baptist Convention in Waco, Texas "Dr. C——— announced that Dr. William E. Hatcher of Virginia the greatest wit in the Convention would immediately preach in a neighboring church. Dr. Hatcher declined to leave the building until Dr. C——— had changed the wording of his announcement and simply spoke of him as a minister of Christ." Dr. Hale adds: "He might have surpassed Mark Twain as an author of humorous works. On the contrary he desired to be known simply as a preacher of the Gospel of Christ."

Digitized by Google

"Nothing is more loathesome" says Dr. Hatcher "than the trade of the fun maker. The professional jester is a bore. We get drowsy in the company of a man who is constantly seeking to make us laugh. We enjoy Mark Twain in a paragraph but we despise him in a book. A single proverb of Josh Billings tickles us to the core but a string of them becomes stale and sickening to us. He who in trying to do some worthy act says a bright thing and surprises us into a laugh has our respect and gratitude; but if he opens on us with his picked jests and pointless puns with the idea that he can convulse us with laughter we get mad on the spot. We refuse to be used for any such purpose.

"1. We must not be funny at the expense of sacred things.

"2. We must not be funny at the expense of decency.

"3. We must not be funny at the expense of charity.

"4. We must not permit our fun to run to excess."

Amid his pressing duties he wrote a letter to Mr. R. B. Garrett on the "Call to the Ministry." Mr. Garrett—now Dr. R. B. Garrett the honored pastor of the Court Street Church in Portsmouth, Va.—in sending the letter for use in this biography says:

"This letter from your father was the first counsel I ever had in helping me to decide on my life's work and it had much to do with my decision. It is so clear and strong that it might help others who are struggling as I was."

"Richmond, Va., Sept. 26th, 1876.

"Mr. R. B. Garrett,

"My Dear Bro:

"It is not easy to define a call to the ministry, but I say generally that it is a persuasion that God has chosen us to preach the Gospel. We may have many doubts about it—feel too feeble for so mighty a work and be oppressed with a sense of our own inefficiency and yet with all this have a conviction abiding and deepening that we must preach. In some cases there is a feeling of duty without any desire to preach; in others there is a desire to preach without a satisfactory sense of duty and in others yet there is the double sense of duty and desire. Some men are driven into the ministry under the whip of conscience

Digitized by Google

and at the expense of cherished worldly purposes; others are floated into it on the current of their love and zeal for Christ. The former preach because they must; the latter because they would. Where this desire to preach exists, it must spring from a proper motive—that is, not from a selfish ambition but from a wish to glorify God. If a young man desires to devote himself to the service of the Lord and feels convinced after prayerful investigation that he can be more useful by preaching than in any other way then I would say that he is called to preach.

"I believe in a call to the ministry—a divine call; but not that it is sent under startling or miraculous circumstances. It is the call of the Spirit of God in the heart, not audible not suddenly given but gently and gradually stamping the impress of duty upon the soul.

"This call to duty is made manifest to us in different ways—to some by such consciousness of duty as cannot be questioned; to others by a restless anxiety which weans them from other things and slowly turns them to their work; to others by outside influences such as the opinions and counsels of brethren. It happens often, though not always, that others will discover a young man's suitableness for the ministry before he sees it himself.

"There are certain actual qualities which a man who is to preach should have and without which he need not think himself chosen for the work. He must have a capacity and fondness for study—an aptness to teach and some talent for public speaking, though he will not always be the best judge about these gifts, but should seek counsel from others. He must not feel that he is good, for none of us are good but he must have real faith in Jesus, warm zeal for his glory, tender love for human souls and a readiness to consecrate his heart and hands to the work of God.

"I must not judge for you in this matter. It is a question between you and your Savior and you must settle it. If I were to judge from your letter I would say that God is working on your heart to bring you into the ministry. Is not this your conviction on the subject. If you feel so then I counsel you to turn aside from other matters and prepare for your life's work. I pray that God will guide you into the way of duty. I will be happy to hear from you again.

"Your brother in Jesus

"W. E. Hatcher."

Digitized by Google

On Nov. 26th of this year he preached on "The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings. Philippians 3:10. I. The Fellowship of Christ. II. The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings. III. The Knowledge of this Fellowship." On Dec. 30th he preached on "Christ's Witnesses. Acts 1:8. I. The Issue,—the Resurrection of Christ. II. The Court. III. The Character of the Witnesses". His days were crowded with toil and often with travel into different parts of the state.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

1877-1878.

INTEREST IN YOUNG PREACHERS. PASTORAL VISITING. CAREFULNESS IN PREPARING PUBLIC ADDRESSES. DAILY SCHEDULE.

Richmond College occupied a large place in his ministry. A new student would not be on the Campus long without learning that down at the Grace Street Church was a pastor who was not only a great friend to the College boys but also a preacher whom the students delighted to hear. The ministerial students especially turned to him for sympathy and counsel and flocked to his preaching.

"When I first went to Richmond College a green country boy" says Dr. J. J. Taylor "he was very kind to me. Through all the succeeding years. . . . in many ways I have made him my ideal."

"The second year I was in Richmond College writes Rev. J. J. Wicker "a man from down South was accused of cheating on examination. It was a dark time for him and there was an agitated inquiry as to his guilt or innocence. He was finally expelled. Now this young man happened to be a ministerial student and the cloud over his life seemed to shut out every ray of hope. A number of young men were gathered together discussing the case and wondering if anything could be done for him.

"They finally reached a conclusion with out any leader in the discussion. It seemed to break upon them all at once that there was one man in Richmond who would help a man who was wounded and in distress and they said with one accord 'There is one man who we know will help him and that man is Dr. William E. Hatcher' and he did. The young man has arisen again and is one of the most devoted pastors in a far Southern State."

Digitized by Google

He was president of the Education Board at the College,—a Board which aided young preachers in their education at the College and this fact brought him into helpful relations with nearly all the ministerial students. In writing of Dr. Hatcher's kindness to him at the beginning of his College career Dr. M. L. Wood says: "In my examination before the Education Board of which you know he was president for so long, he frightened me greatly by asking me to parse the sentence 'The horse ran down the hill and broke the chaise.'" I heard him tell of an amusing incident that occured one day at a meeting of the Board. One of the students was being questioned as to his ministerial call when one of the members of the Board—a member of the Faculty—said in somewhat solemn, earnest tones: "My young brother do you feel that you can say with the Apostle Paul: 'I'll be damned if I do not preach the gospel?'" It is hardly surprising that the young brother's answer was seriously interrupted by the explosion of laughter that broke upon the head of the innocent and startled professor. It is hoped that the candidate convinced the Board of his sense of obligation to preach even though he was not able to express his purpose in the language suggested by the professor.

Dr. Hatcher's helpfulness to young men did not stop with Richmond College or Richmond City.

Rev. W. H. Baylor writes:

"When I was a boy of eleven years Dr. Wm E.. Hatcher of Richmond, Va., came into our home and singled me out as his favorite. Putting his hand on my head, he said, 'This boy is going to be a preacher.' During this and several subsequent visits I was constantly with him, and he would talk to me about preaching. Through him, God called me into the ministry."

It was my privilege recently to preach for Mr. Baylor and I can never forget the burning intensity with which he told his congregation of what Dr. Hatcher had been to him. His heart poured itself out in a fulness of affectionate appreciation that

Digitized by Google

startled me and that gave me a new realization of how deeply and profoundly his influence could be wrought into young men.

"No man of my acquaintance" said Rev. R. P. Rixey "has touched more deeply my life in all things spiritual than Dr. William E. Hatcher." His passion for helpfulness seemed a second nature with him. In the case of young preachers the recollection of his own stumblings and struggles at the gateway of his ministry seemed to kindle his heart into sympathy for them. "One of the finest things about him" says Dr. Geo. B. Taylor "was his love and fellowship for his younger brethren in the ministry." His helpfulness did not wear the garb of compliments nor mere aimiable and friendly words. His eye would strike for the center of the young man's needs and possibilities. Sometimes it was a fatherly criticism that was needed,—or even reproof; sometimes a tender inquiry about his history or condition, ofttimes a word of light and cheer and inspiration. For the young fellow who clung to his vain conceit or the youth who insisted on being a fool or a crank he stood dumb-founded and would sometimes turn away in despair.

There were few Summers in his life from this time forth that he did not find himself in the North speaking at some denominational gathering, or preaching in one of the churches. In May he spoke in Boston and also at the Baptist Anniversaries in Providence.

He welcomed his Summer vacation because it meant for him the chance to take to the woods,—not for frolic with gun or fishing rod, nor for cultivating the acquaintance of hammocks or the green grass, but for the hardest and the most fascinating toil to him—that of holding protracted meetings with the country churches, and attending country district Associations.

"We bless the Lord" he said "for ten thousand things and one of the most delightful of them is that we do not have to rest during August. The seaside is lovely, the Springs charming, the mountains sublime, the country cousins famous for domestic comforts and sweet welcome, but better far than this is the fellowship and rapture of the Association and the saving

Digitized by Google

glorious revival. We were put in cold storage in former years with a view to the preservation of our pastoral parts but when we were taken out and shipped home in September the autumnal heats played wreck with our newly acquired tenderness."

Some men love the country for the beauties of nature, but the most attractive sight the country could afford him was its people—so simple, so open hearted, so responsive and so true. Every Fall after his return to Richmond from his summer travels he would begin his "grand round" of visiting when he would seek to call upon every family of his church. It meant a continuous tramp, day by day, ringing door bells and encountering experiences that were sometimes as rough as they were varied. But the charm of it was that he sprang to it with a happy bound and a joyful relish. Concerning the pastoral visit he writes:

"Here are two ministers, both pastors. One of them has a crotchet against the pastoral visit. He declares that it is a waste of existence to go poddering after vapid old women, cajoling heartless misers, or effervescing over unsoaped children. He contends that it interferes with his sermon, retards his intellectual pursuits and takes the edge off his genius. It irritates him to go, depresses him to get there, and worries him to know what to say when he arrives.

"The other man is not so. To begin with he loves people—loves them by nature and by grace—loves his own especially—loves to see them—enjoys talking to them—grieves to tear away from them.

"Now start these two men forth to pay the visit. The first goes like the oft mentioned "scourged slave." He starts in a fret, dreads the meeting, grows dull and awkward as he enters, drags in the talk, embarrasses the lady, and leaves as if escaping from a burning ship. Write it at the top of your journal that a visit like that will unsettle a pastor if repeated twice. Some pastors may be dislodged for not visiting, but the man will lose his place sooner or later on account of his visits. A grudging visit will electioneer against a pastor.

"But take the other man—let him go out on his visit. They will know his knock or his ring. Mother and children

Digitized by Google

will come tumbling and dashing out to meet him with a welcoming smile. At sight of him happy talk will begin to run. First pleasantries will flutter like lighting birds and then serious things—the church, the home troubles, the absent children, and the kingdom of God will all get a mention—the Bible will be opened—a tender prayer, and then the good man is gone. No, not exactly gone: he is followed out into the hall, all talking as they go, encounters a loving hold-up at the door and a fire of kindly words rattle after him as he goes rapidly away. Ah, no; he never goes away. His light shines there day and night. The aroma of his visit lingers in the house. When the good man comes home at night, all of it is gone over again, and each member of the household grips more tightly into the life of the pastor. That is a visit which cements the union and makes it easy and delightful for the pastor to stay as long as he will.

"Ye, proud and high-stalking men, who scoff at the visit, take a word of counsel. It may do you good. If you are averse to personal contact with your people, if you shrink from companionship with them, if you hate the visit, then get ready to move. You cannot stay unless you visit, and if you hate the visit which you make, keep your grip-sack packed and be ready upon notice to move on. The end is near at hand."

It would have been impossible to say which held a higher place with him.—the pastoral visit or the sermon. He said on one occasion: "The sermon and the visit are twins, inherently congenial and complementary one of the other."

At the end of the year on Dec. 30th he preached on the "The unchanging God" (Mal. 3; 6.). He began by saying, "We stand to-day on the crumbling edge of the old year"; and he spoke of God as changeless in being, character and purpose.

One of his marked traits was his respect for his public engagements. He was invited to speak at the ordination of a young minister, Rev. C. H. Nash at the High Hills Church in Sussex county. He accepted the invitation; but did he wait until he took the train for the ordination and then hastily fling together certain vagrant thoughts? He might have done so. It was a simple country congregation at the little High Hills church and, with his crowded life, why should he not

Digitized by Google

have quickly improvised a suitable speech for such an occasion?

But No. That address was a public trust. A young man was to be formally set apart to the work of the Gospel ministry and he had been asked to deliver the "Charge" to the young minister as he stood on the threshold of his ministry. It was certainly no trifling event in the life of Mr. Nash. Dr. Hatcher decided that he would seek to make it a memorable event not only in the career of that young man but also of that community.

Nearly all his papers were destroyed by fire but among those that were in another building at the time of the fire two manuscripts of the above address have been found, written in very neat and careful manner and if these two manuscripts bearing such marks of completeness have been found it suggests that there were probably other papers representing work which was preliminary to the above. It shows that he had not yet flung aside his practice of rewriting and of hard labor upon his literary productions. Such drill of course consumed much of his time in his busy life but it paid him amply in the future and enabled him during the later years to speak off-hand and write with a fluency and literary charm that would have been impossible without this early grind and toil.

I quote a few paragraphs from the address:

"My Beloved Brother: I am commissioned by my brethren of the Presbytery to assure you of their confidence and affection and to charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ to wear worthily the ministerial office with which you are, to-day, formally invested. . . . . .

"It is fearful to be a young preacher—to be good looking—to have sparkling fancy and ready speech—to be popular and to be counted a success. There are weak men and silly women to spoil and wreck young preachers.

"It has never been my misfortune to be popular but let me say I have had my enthusiastic admirers—that blew my trumpet on the outer wall—that said I could beat them all and hung entranced on all that fell from my lips—until something fell that they did not like and then they fell—fell away, and

Digitized by Google

some of them fell on me and if God had been as forgetful of me as they were they would have made me fall and fall to rise no more.

"When a preacher begins to think more highly of himself than he ought he begins to be a fool and if you will give him time he will prove it.

"Thus far I have never killed a man and humbly pray that such a bloody necessity may never fall on me but if I had to do it and could pick my man I think I should imbrue my hands in the blood of one of these ministerial puffs—the swelling coxcomb that struts the pulpit as a stage and preaches to show himself.

"If the greatest of all preachers counted himself less than the least of all the saints and mourned all his days over his sins and imperfections; if indeed Jesus Christ himself was 'meek and lowly in heart' what opinion does it become us to have of ourselves."

"If a man cant keep out of debt let him keep out of the pulpit."

"If you ever make a man you must court solitude."

"They only move the world whom the world cannot move."

One day a horse and buggy arrived at his front gate. The buggy was new and the horse was a stranger in those parts and they both proved to be a gift from the Grace Street church to their pastor. The horse was small and black and was given the name of "Grace", Dr. Hatcher saying that as the street on which he lived was Grace and his Church was the Grace Street Church and that now as his horse bore the same name he hoped that she would indeed prove a means of Grace to him. She did her part nobly as the pastor's assistant though she varied the exercises one day. In her haste to reach the depot with Dr. Hatcher and Dr. John William Jones (of large build) in the buggy with myself jammed in between she did not calculate well the incline of the street; she went dashing around another vehicle that was approaching us; our buggy gave a circling swing and over and down the incline towards the gutter went the buggy with Dr. Jones on the upper side of the human pile and Grace lying meekly on her side.

Saturday afternoon was his time for taking a "spin into the

Digitized by Google

country"—behind Grace—and nearly always he would pick up one of the Richmond pastors for his traveling companion and with few exceptions this companion would be his beloved McDonald while between their knees sat a happy little "scrap of a chap"—the son of the driver who would listen with eager enjoyment to their familiar chats.

He would reach his study each morning about nine or nine-thirty o'clock and to him that room was a haven of delight and yet no busy pastor ever threw open his study door with a gladder welcome for the visitor than did he. He had no tricks for quickly disposing of the long winded brother. Nothing was so interesting to him as people and he gave them a royal hearing.

"I tried several times" said his wife "to get him to have certain hours to see visitors, but he would always say; 'No; my door must always stand open lest someone be turned away whom I ought to help' He said his best rest came by going out into the country every Friday or Saturday."

His open door policy sometimes brought him hopeless interruption but even in such cases he would often extract some gleams of humor. One morning just as he was getting well settled in his work in came a visitor.

"He was a strapping burly fellow in the bloom of youth and would have weighed well nigh 200 pounds. He informed us that he was a blacksmith by trade but had determined to bid adieu to the anvil and try his fortune as a book agent. He pleasantly hinted at the greatness of our reputation and influence and requested us to 'prescribe' for the 'Light of all Nations'. We told him modestly that the influence of our name was a myth and that financially we were trembling over the abyss. We asked him to excuse us but his brow already beaded with perspiration grew grim with dissatisfaction.

"He told us that he never expected to meet such a repulse at our hands. He said that our name would bring many purchasers to his side and that if we refused to give it the consequences would be bad for him. Once more we asked him to excuse us but he said the book was cheap,—less than four dollars if we would take the book with the paper board binding

Digitized by Google

and he really thought that we might spend that much just to encourage a young man. We told him that we were fond of young men and delighted to see them encouraged. We begged him to be encouraged in an independent way and not to look entirely to us for it. We suggested that we could not quite afford to spend four dollars for a book that we did not need even though in doing so we might add to his encouragement. He looked at us in a confused and bitter way and said 'Then you mean to say that you will not prescribe'. We begged him to feel friendly to us, not to cherish revenge and not to fall out with the world. He said it was hard to bear and that he knew not where to go next but that he would strive to meet his troubles as became a man and so we parted, or at least we thought we had parted; but when he got to the door he paused and sorrowfully asked: 'Is your mind made up not to prescribe'. We told him that our intellectual machinery was a little disjointed but that as far as we understood the case we thought it was a foregone conclusion that we would not prescribe and then the stairway fairly trembled beneath his sluggish tread as he went out."

At 11:30 he would close his study, go across the street to his buggy which Uncle Davy, the Sexton, would always have ready for him tied at the accustomed tree and "Grace" would go trotting off with him on his visiting rounds which would usually last until three o'clock when he would arrive at home in time for his ten minutes nap on the couch in the sitting room, where his sleeping would often, though not always, advertize its progress by vigorous snoring. That nap was a miracle worker. He could fall asleep almost immediately upon closing his eyes and at the end he would arise with mind and body rejuvenated. "Blessings light on him that invented sleep" says Cervantes "It covers a man all over,—thoughts and all like a cloak." Happily has sleep been styled "nature's soft nurse." Dr. John A. Broadus used to tell the story of Dr. Smith and another professor at the University of Virginia being seated one day in a room together engaged in some literary employment when one of them exclaimed with a sigh as he found himself nodding over his work: "Oh my! I am such a

Digitized by Google

sleepy head and I have so much important labor yet ahead of me."

The other professor clapped his hands quite vigorously. "What is that for?" asked the other. "Why I am so glad that you do fall to sleep for now I know that you will never kill yourself working." Dr. Hatcher would often come into the house greatly fatigued and it was undoubtedly his ability to drop into a quick slumber that enabled him to keep his vitality at high level and that postponed the date of his death. Old Dr. Sam Johnson said "I never take a nap after dinner except when I have had a bad night and then the nap takes me." Dr. Hatcher's naps always seemed to "take him" though they very rarely waited until after dinner before pouncing upon him.

Sometimes he would return home by two o'clock and call for his wife who would go to his desk and for an hour act as his amanuensis as he walked up and down the room dictating some address or article for a newspaper or letters to people. In the meantime the children were piling in from school and the dinner bell would rally the family around the table in the dining room at 3:15 o'clock.

In the afternoon he would take his recreation, which generally meant a game of croquet at the College.

After supper,—what would it be?—a prayer meeting—or a church meeting—or a deacons meeting,— or a Society meeting—or some social gathering—or possibly a lecture on Church Hill—or a sermon at Venable Street—or an address at Pine Street—or an ordination sermon at the Second Church—Who can recount the uncountable engagements that block the way of a city pastor from his supper to his slumbers. A "City Pastor's Evenings"—what a story they would tell. As a rule he would return home at night about 9:30 or 10 P. M. for a two hour's toil at his desk by the window in the front second story room. Here he would write while the family were gathered around the fire and offtimes the group was enlarged by the presence of visitors who had "dropped in" after the meeting or who were spending the evening. It was amid such

Digitized by Google

clatter that he would do his writing; while they talked his pen would be busily picking its way across the page and every now and then he would interject a question, or some side remark into the conversation, thus showing that if his eye was following his pen, his ear was following the talk. His mind was alert to what was going on around him. "But Doctor" one of the visitors would say "how can you write in the midst of our noise?" "I like it" he would say "talk on; it helps me to think. It is when you stop talking that I stop." Such self control was one of his hard won victories. Often in company with boys or grown people, he would call out to them: "Talk", or "Tell me something" and he would listen keenly and with appreciation.

His late working hours at night made him also a late riser,—though he generally reached his study between 9 and 9:30 every morning. One morning a carpenter, one of his members, came to fix one of the closets in the bed room. He arrived at about eight o'clock and was informed that it was too early for him to do the work, that Dr. Hatcher was not awake. "What; not awake yet?" he said with an almost horrified expression. "No" said Mrs. Hatcher. "You must remember you work in the day and he works much in the night," and she might have added "as well as in the day."

Until he was an old man he usually averaged eight hours sleep. It ought to be mentioned that his first act each morning was to call for the "Richmond Dispatch"which he would read in bed. A few years later it was his custom, after reading his morning paper, to give the signal to his two youngest daughters Elizabeth and Edith and they would come bouncing in for a fruit feast in bed. Many were the mornings that I would run down to Phillips' store to buy a bag of fruit for the three feasters. What chattering and discussing they would have and what stories they would tell as they made the bananas and peaches disappear until the first bell would bring their happy clatter to an end and summon them out of bed and off to their dressing and a few minutes later the rattle in the dining room

Digitized by Google

would announce the arrival of the family for breakfast. Of course his schedule for the day often suffered shipwreck under the storms of duties that raged around him. Trips out of the city, funerals and other engagements would frequently play havoc with his daily programme and sometimes the calls for his services would be so numerous that he would be bewildered in choosing between them.

"I was often told in my callow days" said he "that there could be no possible conflict of duties and I believed it and am trying to believe it yet. Possibly somewhere in the unfathomed underground there is a central station into which all duties run, arriving on time and never causing delays and never having collisions. But when these claims tumble out in scores and rush upon the startled and overtaxed pastor they give no note of harmony. Their riot and clash are the storm center of his existence.

"Before his head leaves his pillow in the morning his books, letters, funerals, visits, sermons unmade, company, dinners, duns, beggars, broken gates, marketing,— Ah, things innumerable and unconceived assail him with demoniacal fury.

"Now as far as possible he must with the best intention schedule his life to meet all reasonable demands and upon every performance there must be the stamp of thoroughness and fidelity. The only disposition to be made of a duty is to do it well and on time and say nothing about it."

The Herald in its report of the meeting of the Portsmouth Association in June said: "Dr. W. E. Hatcher stated that he was endeavoring to secure work for the young men of Richmond College and wished to hear from the ministers present during the session."

He writes on June 19th to his wife who was at Old Point:

"My Dear Jennie:

"The most that I can say of yesterday is that it was a most tremendously rainy day. The morning was spent in my study with Dunnaway. At 12 M I went to the Alumni meeting and was the third time made president; had a quiet dinner with the children. At dinner I got a card saying that Bettie would be over at 3 1-2 o'clock. I jumped in the buggy and put off to the depot where I found her.

Digitized by Google

"The children are getting on well. They are to have a blackberry roll today and a chicken pie. Whiteley (a Methodist Minister) is to dine with us.

"Yours

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

On the 22nd he writes again to his wife:

"My Dear Jennie:

"This is Saturday morning and I am far behind in my preparation for to-morrow. Mrs. Hallowell gave the children a "breaking up party." They invited Kate, but she had "nothing to wear" as she said. Matters at home move on better than I expected. Orie is attentive, energetic and thoughtful and Nancy does far better than I expected. Kate is quiet and seems the most contented of all. Eldridge is as wild and romping as possible but very obliging. He does all that I tell him and very cheerfully—except when he forgets it. Give my warm regards to the friends who are with you. Tell old sister T——— that it is reported that she was figuring very handsomely in the ball room on Thursday night but I am sure that she will do the correct thing in all respects."

He writes on September 13th to his wife:

"Dear Jennie:

"I am quietly at work. For some cause there was not a quorum of deacons and hence no meeting. I have approached some few on the subject of reducing my salary and they think it will be necessary.

"My people are unusually cordial with me and my purpose is to work my best this season and in every way advance the interests of the church. I find myself in for a lecture in New Kent and am bothered about it. It is Tuesday 17th.

"I have two of my folks to bury to-day, one this morning—one now. "Yours

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

1879-1880.

BALTIMORE VISIT. FONDNESS FOR GAMES. HOSPITALITY. ADDRESS ON DR. JETER.

In January of this year, 1879, he held at the Eutaw Place church in Baltimore a revival meeting which was rich in spiritual fruit but the outstanding feature of the visit for him was his meeting with Mr. Moody, the world renowned evangelist. Nothing was ever so interesting to him as a human being and when the particular "human" whom he was to meet was such a personality as the above preacher it meant a high day for him. He saw deeply into men and what he saw in Mr. Moody thrilled and delighted him. Concerning Mr. Moody he said:

"On the night of my arrival, Dr. Kerfoot told me that several ministers were to meet Mr. Moody privately the next morning, and that he had arranged for me to be in the company. This, of course, was a delightful surprise and privilege to me. There were about a dozen, possibly a few more, ministers present, having been assembled in a quiet room at the Y. M. C. A. Hall. Asking for silence, Moody said, in substance: 'My brethren, I called you here because I need you. I find my strength small in this city. My spirit is bound, and I cannot rise. I brought you here to ask you to pray for me. Pray that I may have liberty and do my work in Baltimore.' By a common impulse, all sank to their knees, and for a time, of which not one took note, there was constant crying. One after another led, until each one had prayed aloud, some possibly more than once. It was a fervent and thrilling meeting, but I recall no prayer except that offered by Moody. That was burned into the very tissue of my being—a revelation of the

Digitized by Google

most earnest man that I had ever touched and, after the service ceased, I almost imagined that Moody had really been glorified. He shook Baltimore that winter."

Soon after his return to Richmond he said to his wife: "Eutaw Place Church gave me $200 and I shall use it for fixing up a "preachers' room in the house." He made a rule about the room that no one—be he king or pope—except a preacher or a preacher's wife should ever sleep in that room. This became as the law of the Medes and Persians,—which could not be broken But we will let him tell of his Baltimore visit. The following letter which he wrote to his cherished friend, Dr. Thomas Pritchard of Raleigh was published in the Recorder and in the Herald:

"I am just a few days out of Baltimore after a stay and work there of three weeks. It was one of the most delightful of the many bright and happy experiences that God has given me in this world.

"One more thing about myself. When I left Baltimore I found a $200 check in my hand given me by the Eutaw Place brethren. It somewhat embarrassed me, almost as much as the want of such a treasure has sometimes done. The money seemed a sacred thing—a part of the sentiment and glory that had invested my soul during my visit. After reflection I resolved that it should not be spent for casual or common things. I took it and furnished my rear parlor as a 'preacher's room.' As long as I live and am able that room shall be for a resting place for the Lord's angels and a remembrance of Baltimore. We are now busy in arranging all the ornaments and trimmings that we can afford for rendering it cosy, inviting and beautiful. When finished I must dedicate it and greatly wish 'my own friends' might be present to take part in the hospitable exercises. It is to be known as 'Eutaw Place'. I could have no greater joy in it all than to have you to be the first to sleep in it.

"I saw the Baltimore preachers. - Williams grows to be venerable for want of some older man to do that for him. Kerfoot is a bundle of nervous fury and if he explodes his fury against anything it has to go. . . .

"Dr. Franklin Wilson is one of Heaven's best. I look at him and blush that I am not a better man.

Digitized by Google

"Moody impressed me to the very bottom of my nature. He is a man of God. He is honest, gentle and wise—three elements almost making a man perfect."

The room back of the parlor was selected for the preachers' room and with its new equipment was transformed into the most beautiful room in the house. All its furnishings and decorations, as far as possible, were of blue and after awhile it came to be known in the family as the "Blue Room". When the room was completed it was publicly dedicated, Rev. Dr. T. T. Eaton of Petersburg making the dedicatory speech

There was one saving clause in his straining life. It was his love of games. His nature clamored for them and never ceased its clamor during his life. If we burrow down into his soul for an explanation of his fondness for games we find it, I believe, in his love of contest and of victory. The instinct for games seems universal and during the centuries has expressed itself in many forms, national as well as individual. For games that have in them simply the "play" element—so congenial and attractive to children he cared nothing. It was the clash and struggle in games that attracted him. He was the child's friend but he would never romp and frolic with them in any meaningless noises or movements. He could not play games with them in that sense. But in games of encounter where brain and daring were called into play he was ready at first call and the hours in such games which he spent with children—especially in his later life—would if counted run up into surprisingly high figures.

His love for contest showed itself often in his intercourse with men. He did not like for people blandly to agree with him. He enjoyed the bristle of a controversy. Conflict rather than compliance on the part of another waked his powers to their best

His favorite game was Croquet and everybody knew that if Dr. Hatcher was wanted in the afternoon he could be found at Richmond College on the Croquet ground. He entered into the contest with an ardor that would do credit to a base-

Digitized by Google

ball enthusiast of today. During the game he would be oblivious of the outside world. All his mental forces were concentrated on the struggle; he wanted victory. He threw himself into the game with a perfect abandon, suffered anxieties and disappointments when defeat threatened him, pressed his antagonist harder than ever and shouted his glee when victory perched upon his banners. How often after a straining game that had kept him alternating between hope and fear up to the very end, but which closed with a stroke that gave him the victory, his long tension would give way to exultation and his happy shouts could be heard from one end of the campus to the other and everybody when they heard it knew what it meant. "Dr. Hatcher has won" they would say.

For a year or more Prof. Harris' yard was the play ground. Every afternoon my father and I would drive to the College for the game. As we entered Prof. Harris' yard and came under his study window my father would cry out "Harris" "Harris" and out from the window would come the reply "All right—in a moment." The professor's papers would be laid aside and soon the contest would begin and for an hour or two we would be at it. Back and forth the tide of battle would swing, for Prof. Harris and Dr. Hatcher were croquet experts,—not so much in the simple art of being able to send the ball straight to the desired mark but in the more important matter of planning and plotting for victory. Sometimes dark would overtake us in the game but it was regarded not. Handerchiefs were hung on the wickets and were held over the balls. Darkness would settle on the yard but still each side pushed on in the hope of being the winner while a light of some kind was held over the target;—and when the end came it was a shouting climax.

Ofttimes the games were played out on the College campus. His croquet playing with the students linked itself helpfully into their lives.

The games often drew spectators who became interested in watching Dr. Hatcher not only in his plays but in his enjoy-

Digitized by Google

ments and in his disappointments, in his groans and in his shouts. He was so real, so truly himself that he was naturally interesting and instructive. Rev. H. W. Williams, an old Richmond College student and now an honored pastor in Georgia thus wrote in the Herald regarding Dr. Hatcher on the Croquet ground:

"Soon after my arrival at Richmond College I met the man who had inspired the ambition which had brought me there. It was on the croquet grounds of the campus and we engaged in a game together. This was the first of many games we played together. In my ear is ringing to-day with perfect distinctness the voice of Dr. Hatcher as he many times stood beneath my window calling: 'Williams, Williams, come out of there and lets have a game.' My life was considerably influenced by things that happened on those grounds when Dr. Hatcher was playing. I remember hearing him say one time: 'No man ought to be permitted to preach who will cheat in a game of croquet.' Some years afterwards he told me of his voting against the election of a man to an important position because he remembered that he used to cheat in that game on the College campus. I am sure that my life is different from what it would have been if I had never engaged with Dr. W. E. Hatcher in those games." Another student Rev. J. W. Wildman writes: "I was inclined to neglect exercise and necessary play. But almost every afternoon when he [Dr. Hatcher] had attended to pressing pastoral work he drove out to the College to play croquet with Prof. Harris. His example coupled with the vast amount of church work which he did was a convincing argument as to the value of recreation."

Later on in his life another game seemed to win first place in his favor,—the game of quoits. The probable reason was that croquet required so much bending of the body that as he approached old age he found it easier to adjust himself to the game of quoits. "I was pitching quoits with your father" writes Dr. W. W. Everts of Boston "the stakes were far apart. A ringer was very rare. His opponent pitched a horse shoe. As

Digitized by Google

it started Dr. Hatcher said: 'I have an impression that this will be a ringer.' And it was."

He delivered the Commencement address before the Female College in Greenville S. C. and in his opening remarks drew an amusing picture. He began by announcing that everytime he delivered a final address before a Female College he was filled with a sickening sense of failure.

"Why such an unhappy fate should always pursue me at such a time is quickly explained," he said. "In my early manhood my nervous system got a shock from which it has never recovered. From my youth I have had extravagant admiration for Female Colleges. They seemed enchanted ground and I fancied that within their classic domain dwelt all the genius, innocence, beauty and glory of womanhood. I nursed the manly purpose that if ever I spread my sail to the matrimonial wave some gifted and scholarly young sister from a Female Institute should go with me. My youthful ardor soon turned to adoration and directed itself against a certain bright-eyed charmer—in my eye the fairest of all God's making and in her eye as I too fondly fancied shone ineffable love for me.

"The time was Sunday night and the scene of the tragedy was the parlor of a Female School. Though I had her alone and though my address was prepared and committed, when the crisis came my address stuck inextricably in my throat and I broke ruinously down before I got in sight of my best poetic quotations upon which I mainly depended for bringing her to terms.

"To her credit be it said that by her blushing and decorous hesitation she helped me to an avowal. I think I can say as a religious man that I harbor no bitter feelings against her but I can never forget that gleam of coquettish villainy in her eye when after my lips had told their tender secret she informed me that she was already engaged. Tumbling myself in clumsy desperation from the parlor to the street and shrinking away into a forsaken part of the town I almost forgot my loss of the girl in my overwhelming shame in having broken down in my address. From that night I have had a powerful conviction that delivering final addresses (and my first was my final) at Female institutes is at best an uncertain business. There always creeps over me the bewildering feeling that I am about to pop the question to an entire College of young women and that their inevitable reply will be 'already engaged.'"

Digitized by Google

His subject was the "Educated Woman." He declared that the educated woman was a modern institution. "The Greek ideal was beauty of form; the Roman was that of service. Even the woman of Israel, the noblest of early times, received only an incidental religious culture."

He declared that woman "sees truth with the heart. She feels her way to her conclusions."

He then raised the question as to why woman should be educated if it is her heart rather than her mind that guides her and "she darts to her conclusions on the wings of intuition and believes in its divinity?"

He gives two reasons in reply:

"1. A woman's intuitions are partly mental and grow better by cultivation. 2. The specific value of intellectual education is to make a woman examine her premises—both to make her more accurate and to prepare her to teach."

"After all education is not to find a new sphere for a woman but to fit her better for the old one. A woman is pretty sure to think that to change a book for a broom is not in the line of promotion."

"The mistakes of life spring either from ignorance or perversity."

"The finest cookery book in the country was written by the most literary woman that Virginia has produced for a half century, Marion Harland. . . . The young woman who can not help her mother set the table, count the spoons, sew a button on her brother's clothes, fry a steak, bake a pudding, grind the coffee, feed the fowls or water the flowers is not educated. She must put her higher knowledge in use in the plain and humble work of the home and the church."

In August he takes a long leap. Far out into the mountains of Southwest Va. he goes to attend the meeting of the Lebanon Association, to speak for the Education Board and to meet the Baptists in that picturesque, mountain country. In writing about his visit he said: "The first thing I did and the principal thing I did in Bristol was to fall in love with brother N. C. Baldwin."

Digitized by Google

His visit must have carried much sunshine and cheer for the Lebanon saints for one of them wrote in the Herald:

"The Education Board sent among us a man whose kind, open, christian face makes you love him even before you feel the warm grasp of his brotherly hand. Of course I mean its president, Dr. William E. Hatcher."

Public collections had become a sort of second nature with the Grace Street church. On appointed days there were offerings taken at the morning service for Foreign Missions, for Home Missions, for State Missions and so on; and on each occasion he would invariably preach on the subject for the day and seek to kindle his hearers, into large generosity for the Board. During this Fall season he preached a series of Sunday night sermons on "The Women of the New Testament." They attracted large audiences.

He steps through the gateway of "1880" little dreaming of the events which the year held in store for him. On February 18th Dr. Jeremiah B. Jeter died and his death left a large gap in Dr. Hatcher's life. The impress of Dr. Jeter's character on him was very marked.

"How can I speak of him?" said Dr. Hatcher a few months later. "I am reminded that when I was a motherless boy on my old father's knee and he sought to enkindle within my soul high aspirations he would point to the example and character of this man of God. Most keenly I feel that I am not in anything what he was, nor yet what I would be, but it is meet that I say that next to my Savior's grace for any good in me or good done by me I am most indebted to him.

"Who could have ever dreamed that the rude Bedford boy, that set out sixty years ago as a Baptist preacher would close his life in the midst of such distinction and grief? On the day of his burial I was imprisoned in my chamber of sickness and was denied even the tearful pleasure of following his dust to his silent home. But as the cortege passed my gate I quit my bed and with my wet face pressed against the window pane gazed at the hearse as it bore him away to the cemetery.

"There came back to me the memory of his first entrance

Digitized by Google

into Richmond. Then an awkward, untutored youth, clad in homespun, covered with dust, astride his weary horse and carrying in his saddle bags all his earthly store. Thus he came then, but now he was going out of the city, not to come back again. What a change. Then a stranger in a strange city, but now he was going out escorted by a great and weeping host."

A few days after the death of Dr. Jeter, Dr. Hatcher lifted himself up from his sick bed and said to his wife. "Jennie, I am going to build me a house." His wife thought he was out of his head,—inasmuch as fever would often make him delirious.

"How is that?" she asked "What do you mean? You have no money."

"I will have $1000 come due this Summer from the insurance money. We can break up housekeeping and board more cheaply than we can now live. If we can save $500 this Summer we are safe."

"I saw that he was sane" said his wife. "I made up my mind to help him to do it. We saved $500 that Summer and next year I taught music at Mrs. Hallowell's school,—clothing myself and the children. The house, costing $3500, was built and in three years was paid for."

This was the house at 608 W. Grace Street, about midway between the church and the College and six or seven blocks from each. Here he lived during the remainder of his pastorate. Multitudes were destined to cross its threshold and many were the happy scenes to be enacted within its walls.

The third story front room was made the "prophets' chamber" or the "Blue Room" and it was a long and noble ministerial procession that tramped its way up the stairs and slept within its sacred precincts. Many were the mornings when I would pound on the door and announce to the sleeping "prophet" that it was "time to get up" and "breakfast will be ready in a few minutes."

Christian hospitality was the spirit of the home. It was for him and his wife "open house" all the year round. He would pick up preachers on the streets and in meetings, and

Digitized by Google

608 W. GRACE STREET
His Richmond Home

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

bring them home with him. He would find them packed away in hotels and would ferret them out and bring them to the welcome and joy of his house,—to the restful cosy quiet of the Blue Room. In his early married life his wife said to him one day when he was giving her money for marketing:

"You give me too much each day for our small family" to which he replied:

"I always want to give enough for you to have somethimg extra at meals so that there will always be something for visitors" and the rule about the "extras" lasted to the end. His wife never knew when he would bring in a guest. Often he would come home late for a meal and would come marching into the dining room with the dinner already well under way and most of it out of sight and he would call out to his attendant friend as he would hear the rattle of the knives and forks back in the dining room: "Come on back; I expect they have eaten up everything on the plantation but we will try our fortunes together"—or some such playful expression as that. An extra plate and seat were quickly forth coming and also an extra dinner and to this was added a warm and happy welcome. Regarding his guests the hospitable motto of the home seemed to be:

"Come in the evening or come in the morning
Come when you're looked for or come without warning."

As for the special "dinners" and "breakfasts" and "suppers" at which he gathered his friends they were multitudinous. Thousands of dollars were spent that could be charged only to the "hospitality" account. The other members of the family had their own invited guests and he took equal pleasure in them.

"The Lord gives to me because I give to him" he said to his wife one day when the subject of their large expenditures for entertainment was being discussed. Guests were ever coming and going.

Digitized by Google

"Blest that abode where want and pain despair
And every stranger finds a vacant chair.
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale
Or press the bashful stranger to his food
And learn the luxury of doing good."

His gatherings of preachers around his table brought some choice experiences. On such occasions there were two visitors whom he always sought to keep on the outside—Glumness and Dulness.

At the Sunday School Anniversaries Dr. Hatcher always presented the prizes and he kept the audience which generally overflowed the building in happiest good humor. Instead of having all the prize winners grouped around him at once to receive their rewards he would call them out from the audience one by one and as each would march to the front he would not only have a bright word for him but would keep up a continuous rapid-fire of pleasantries and humorous sallies. The Richmond Dispatch, in reporting one of the celebrations, said of Dr. Hatcher: "his playful hits were greeted by roars of laughter."

He was presenting prizes for punctual attendance and among the prize winners was an old man Mr. Henry———, about 75 years of age, hump backed and sickly. When Dr. Hatcher came to his name he said:

"And here is a prize for another little boy and if little Henry ——— will come forward I will be happy to present to the little fellow his prize."

Far back in the audience the old man pushed his way out of the pew and started up the aisle. His asthma was making him pant and blow in lively fashion.

"Come on little Henry" called out Dr. Hatcher. "Come right up here my little man". The old man's march up the aisle brought down the house with roars of laughter and no one seemed to enjoy it more than the aforesaid 75 year old Henry.

Digitized by Google

In May he attended the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at Lexington Ky. He spoke on Foreign Missions.

There were at this time some thorns in his pillow. The "disturbing element" in his church were still on his track and their arrows often struck him. It was the old faction and they gave him a world of trouble.

"He knew how to wait upon the Lord" says his wife. "Often at this time his family thought that he ought not to suffer so much indignity—that he ought to give up the church; but his reply would be: 'Wait, wait; I can never retreat. I was not born to shirk trouble. Wait for deliverance. It will come.'"

One of the greatest public occasions of his life was the meeting in Petersburg of the General Association in June when he delivered the memorial address on Dr. Jeter.
He describes the scene:

"The handsome auditorium was fittingly decorated. A vast congregation, including several hundred Baptist ministers, many distinguished laymen and not a few chief women of the state, filled the house to overflowing. On the platform were assembled the old preachers—dear old men of God who had long been associated with Dr. Jeter in christian labors. A truly heavenly spirit, sad and yet delightful, pervaded the assembly. It was one of those unique, impressive, wonderful occasions which could never be repeated and cannot be fully appreciated by those who did not witness it. It was the remarkable spectacle of the Virginia Baptists in solemn assembly, lamenting the loss and honoring the memory of the most illustrious man that God had ever given them."

He was at his best that night and a memorable occasion it proved to be. I was present and, while I was too young to estimate fully the address, yet, I well remember the remarkable impression it produced on the audience and the enthusiastic appreciation it awakened. I was caught in the jam of the aisles at the close of the service and from every lip as the people looked into each other's happy faces leaped the words "Oh, what a great address." "It was wonderful!" "Wasn't it glor-

Digitized by Google

ious?" He had lifted them to the height of Jeter's ideals, and, at the close, he had pointed to Jeter's glorified spirit ascending the skies; and when the speaker ended and the congregation was dismissed and as they surged around the pulpit platform and in the aisles, grasping each other's hands there was a light on their faces that seemed as if it might have come from the other world. I, a boy, saw it and felt the thrill of it and the impression made upon my mind, as I was jostled and squeezed in the crowded aisle, was, "My papa has made a wonderful speech tonight." In referring to this address the Herald said:

"This splendid address, for vigor of thought and maturity of expression, was one of the best speeches ever delivered before the General Association. None ever produced a profounder impression."

The address, too long to be presented here, closed with the following words:

"He died splendidly—in all his ripened, glorious prime. He did not crumble into decay, nor shrivel into imbecility. Disease did not waste and age did not shatter him; but, like the imperial leader of Israel, he came to Pisgah with eye undimmed and strength unabated. I count his death pre-eminently happy. In the stillness of the winter night, when his hour came to go his loving father put his finger upon the enginery of his heart—that heart which had been beating, beating, beating for nearly eighty years and beating always highest for his father's honor. He felt the solemn touch and the vast machinery of his life trembled, groaned, creaked and shivered; but only for a moment and then standing suddenly still, his glad spirit was out and gone, upward and away in its celestial flight. It was a translation in its suddenness and an ascension in its triumph and glory.

"When he left the world,—Ah but he has not left it. I do not say, for I do not know, that his spirit yet remains with us. Perhaps it is so. But I do know that the light of his life will not go out. The track through space along which he ascended to his eternal home will always be luminous. I have fancied, if indeed it is a fancy, that when the gate of pearl was opened for him to enter, truant beams of the heavenly glory broke out and are now at large on the earth.

Digitized by Google

"What a happy moment when his spirit crossed the river and saw the great city! What floods of rapture swept over his soul when he heard the peal of the heavenly music and saw the face of his redeemer! What a greeting his old comrades gave him,—Broadus, Poindexter, Taylor and Fuller! What a moment when he and Witt met in their eternal reunion! Joy upon joy when he saw again the spirit of his glorified mother. If he could be happy amid the changes and sorrows of this world, I wonder what his feelings were when he touched the pavement of the heavenly Jerusalem. If on the December morning, he shouted as he emerged from the baptismal waters I wonder what he said at his coronation."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV

1880-1881

REPARTEE. CALL TO LOUISVILLE.

During the Summer he began the erection of his own home and also the remodeling of his church building.

"I went to a long but very harmonious church meeting at night" he writes his wife on July 14th. "The furious brother was absent and everything went beautifully and what is very rare I went home and had a glorious sleep. . . . The church decided during repairs to close at night but gave me no vacation. I think that they forgot it but possibly they may not want me to be away during the Summer. Of course I must go a part of the time."

He hied himself away to the mountains, going far up into Nelson county to aid Rev. S. P. Huff in a protracted meeting at his country church. He carried a fifteen year old lad with him, and one day Mr. Huff was driving them along the road in his rockaway and the boy was using his rubber "gravel shooter" banging away at objects on the road side.

Soon they came in sight of some cows drowsily grazing on a slope, probably 125 feet, or more, from the road, and from the neck of each cow was swinging a bell.

"Hit the bell on that cow and I will give you a quarter" called out Dr. Hatcher singling out one of the cows. The offer made the boy jump and put him on his mettle. He leaned forward, pulled back the rubber, took eager aim and sent the pebble singing through the air with nervous expectancy. A "ting-a-ling" from the bell brought a laughing shout of ap-

Digitized by Google

proval from Dr. Hatcher and his companion and a feeling of triumph and a quarter to the highly privileged lad beside them.

I went with him to the ———— Association where a characteristic incident occured. It was the afternoon of the first day and delegates were being assigned to their homes where they were to be entertained. My father and I were out in the church yard and an old farmer, with a rugged face and simple garb, approached us and said: "Dr. Hatcher, I want you to go home with me tonight. I live several miles down the creek but if you can put up with my living, I'll be mighty glad to have you come."

The old fellow's general appearance indicated very plain living and I confess I did not draw any bright pictures of our prospective entertainment for the night. In the meantime other gentlemen came up with their invitations. "Doctor Hatcher," said one, "I want you as my guest to-night," and yet another, "Doctor, I have come for you; my wife said I must certainly bring Dr. Hatcher home with me tonight."

As these men of finer garb and appearance added their invitations I saw the old farmer from down the creek, with a disappointed look on his face, shrink back,—or was almost crowded back—by the gathering group. I shall never forget the surprised and delighted look that came to the old man as Dr. Hatcher said: "I am going with my old friend over there." He, of course, expressed his appreciation of the other invitations. I think he must have seen the disappointment in the kindly face,—at any rate he went; and the visit:—it turned out as such visits usually turned out for him. Great times he had with his happy hearted old host; other preachers were included in the list of guests and among them all none were happier than Dr. Hatcher though his happiness was upset for a few moments on the next morning. Several ministers were in the room together. Dr. Hatcher was lying in bed, and one of the ministers ran to his bed, and in a spirit of fun began to shake him very violently, saying: "Heigho, Hatcher; wake up! wake up; Why dont you get up" or some such words as these.

Digitized by Google

But he did not like such familiarity and rough handling. In fact he seemed to resent it and with a good deal of fire he retorted:

"Stop that, I do not like it at all and you must not take such liberties."

It startled me, for it was rare, indeed, that I ever heard such outbursts from him. His irritation soon passed away, however, like the mist of the morning, but for the moment his anger suffered an explosion and it made plain to all the observers in that room that morning that whatever jocularities they might wish to indulge in with the Doctor they had better not include in their list an early morning jostle in bed.

On another occasion his anger at a brother—a minister I think—rose to a pitch of fury. He and others had ascended a tall mountain and were standing upon an immense rocky level at the summit and were enjoying the splendid view.

The great rock lifted itself high at the top of a precipice. As they were standing several yards from the edge of the table rock, one of the number, a big, burly brother, picked up Dr. Hatcher in his arms and started on a dash with him towards the edge of that precipice in a threatening manner, but in a spirit of mischievous fun. It infuriated Dr. Hatcher.

He was partly frightened by being hurried so precipitately to the mountain top edge but even more he was indignant at such ruthless handling by the brother. He managed to wrest himself from his grasp and delivered himself of a volcanic discourse to the brother aforesaid.

"Beware the fury of a patient man."

A minister, one day, greatly exasperated, used violent language. An Elder said "Dominie, you should restrain your temper." "Restrain my temper; I'd have you know, Sir, I restrain more temper in five minutes than you do in five years."

He was aroused when any one sought to take advantage of him, whether in the social circle, in public assembiles or in any kind of physical handling. He had in him a spirit of

Digitized by Google

retaliation that resented an attack. In the matter of physical encounters he was especially sensitive, because of his crippled hand, which practically put him hors de combat.

There were occasions when one would seek to make a spectacle of him by putting him in an awkward position. With reference to such cases he said:

"My instinct for retaliation always came into play. It sometimes sprang into the arena without granting me one moment for forethought. The man who hit me, I hit—not always wisely and not always wittily, though possibly I might be candid enough to say that if I had any success in public collisions with others, it was in the way of repartee and in speaking thus frankly I cannot acquit myself of an unseemly love of victory. It really seemed to me that in these unexpected passages at arms my answer was invariably born of the attack. It seemed to be waiting there for my use and hardly seemed the product of my own thought."

During his earlier ministry he was attending the ———— Association and one night he and several other ministers were entertained at the same home. Rev. Reuben J————, an old and highly revered pastor, whose religion was of the serious cast, was one of the number. Mr. Hatcher and several other young preachers found themselves in the same room that night with brother Reuben who had already retired and the younger ministers thought that he was asleep. They were in a jovial frame and were indulging in some merry jokes. All at once, brother Reuben slowly lifted his head from his pillow and mournfully drawled out: "What is this I hear; ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in attendance upon a religious Association, and here indulging in such boisterous and worldly levity."

With that doleful pronouncement his head went back upon the pillow and there ensued an awful silence and, as the young preachers began to feel the awkwardness of the situation, Mr. Hatcher, said: "Brother Moderator, I move that the solemn came in at the wrong time."

Digitized by Google

The spell was broken and the other jokers declared afterwards that they hailed William E. as their benefactor. Brother Reuben then passed into the land of Nod.

He had a pleasant little encounter one morning in the pastor's conference in Richmond with Dr. H———. Every Sunday, in Dr. H————'s choir gallery, at the rear of the pulpit, stood a German professor of Music who, with his cornet, led the congregation in the singing.

At the Conference that morning the preachers were making reports. One of them said:

"I heard Dr. Hatcher preach on yesterday and I greatly enjoyed his sermon. It began quietly and simply but it grew larger and larger to the end. It reminded me of a horn."

"A brass horn" blurted out Dr. H——— in a gruff and drawling voice and a sly twinkle in his eye, and with a burst of laughter from the Conference.

"Yes" retorted Dr. Hatcher "and I blew my own horn; I did not have to hire a big fat Dutchman to stand up in my choir and blow it for me."

During the summer it was announced that he would preach in a certain mountain village. A few hours before the service he was approached by a lady, who was a member of another Denomination, who sought an introduction to him.

"Dr. Hatcher" she said in a confidential, but peremptory, tone "I have a special request to make of you."

He bowed his prettiest to the lady and begged her to announce her desires.

"We are going to have a concert at our church tonight, and I want to ask that you will begin your sermon as quickly as you possibly can, and that you will preach just as short a sermon as you can, and then ask the congregation to come around to the concert at our church."

The Herald, in telling of this incident, said: "It is reported that the sermon was unusually long."

He appeared in one of his happiest roles when speaking at District Associations. He seemed always ready and his speeches

Digitized by Google

had in them a spice and sparkle that made him very popular. The Richmond Dispatch said that whenever he arose to speak there "came upon every face a look of satisfaction which seemed to say, 'Now we shall have it.' "

In his travels he crossed the track of a certain Baptist preacher of that day who was beginning to take dips into the "political waters,"—to the regret of his ministerial brethren. One night Dr. Hatcher preached at ——— Court House from the text, "And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent towards Sodom." At one place in the sermon, he said, "Brethren, it has been suggested that Lot was a ruler in Sodom, but I do not believe it. Lot got down low, lower than the very dogs, but I do not believe that he ever dabbled in politics." The above mentioned preacher was one of his listeners.

On Nov. 21st he and his Grace Street people entered their church auditorium which had been refurnished and beautified. It was his custom to make much of special days in his church services.

"A warm and happy greeting to you all" he said in his opening words. "Brethren beloved, saints of this church, I give you a pastor's congratulation as you return to the Lord's house. Come in ye blessed of the Lord rich and poor, old and young; come in to the place which your own generous love has renovated and beautified as the dwelling place of the Most High. . . . For many days some of you have longed to see what your eyes now behold and you are happy."

The skies smiled brightly upon pastor and people and they little thought that in a few days he would receive a letter that would mark an epoch in his life. He received a call about Dec. 13th from the Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., at that time probably the most commanding pastorate in the South. The letter closed as follows:

"We are informed of the devotion of your church in Richmond to you and the opposition you will have to contend with if you are inclined to accept the call; but we believe the good

Digitized by Google

of the Baptist denomination requires your acceptance and that you yourself will be blessed in making the sacrifice of any personal attachment and comforts for the time being and that in the near future you will thank God that you made the movement.

"At any event, we hope that you will make us a visit at any early date. Yours in Christian love

Junius Caldwell
Arthur Peter
Wm. Moses
John B. McFerran
Mason W. Sherrill
W. B. Caldwell
Wm. Harrison
John H. Weller
Deacons of the Church."

This letter struck him a heavy blow. It confronted him with the question as to whether the remainder of his life's work should have its headquarters in Virginia, or in the Middle West. No other pastorate in the entire country could have appealed to him as strongly as did that one. In Louisville was located the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where were gathered for training two or three hundred young ministers from different parts of the world. It is not surprising that the call startled and bewildered him.

He stood at the parting of the ways. On the one hand lay the wide field in the Middle West, while, on the other, lay his own State, where he had built up his ministry and established his influence. In the meantime the news of the Louisville call took wings and met him wherever he went. Friends on the street and in the social circle assured him of their devotion and their earnest hope that he would not go. By almost every mail came letters, some of them lining up on the side of Louisville and others making a plea for Richmond. Dr. M. B. Wharton, a former pastor of the Walnut Street Church, wrote: "Think well before you decline. It is in my judgement, par

Digitized by Google

excellence, the pastorate of the Southern Baptist Convention, especially since the Seminary has been located there."

His lifelong friend, Dr. A. E. Owen, writes:

"You are among the foremost men, if not the foremost man, in the General Association of Virginia. If you go there is no one who could exactly fill your place.

"And yet though it costs me a pang to write it I would say, 'Go'. Louisville is now, and is destined to be still more so, a Baptist center and your influence would go out all over the South and into portions of the North.

"But, at last, this is a matter between you and your Savior. I will quote here a sentence that you wrote to me when I sought your advice in regard to coming here. You said 'Send your telegrams to Heaven.' I can but repeat the injunction."

Dr. Andrew Broadus, Jr., writes him that Virginia Baptist ministers have never done well in the West. Dr. R. M. Dudley, president of Georgetown College, writes:

"Louisville is more than ever destined to become a commercial center for the Southwest. . . Here (at Louisville) you have an opportunity to plant your self at the very source of power and make your influence felt far and near."

In our home the raging question was, "will we go to Louisville or not?" and many nights,—and far into the late hours—I sat around the fire in the sitting room listening to him and my mother talking over the situation.

His new home at 608 West Grace Street had just been completed and entered. When the call came the pictures were then resting on the floor against the walls waiting to be hung and there they stood, while the Louisville matter hung fire. "If we go to Louisville I will not need to hang the pictures" said my mother one day and the rumor sped to the Walnut Street ladies in Louisville that Dr. Hatcher's wife had said that if Dr. Hatcher went to Louisville she would never hang another picture.

His Church awaited his verdict while they crowded him with their appeals that he would not leave them. Not all of

Digitized by Google

his members however, joined in this appeal. "The unfriendly few" were still giving him trouble and his family thought that the factional bother in the church was a strong reason why he should get from under the Grace Street strain and accept the call to Louisville.

Christmas came and still the question hung unanswered.

His friend, Dr. J. R. Bagby, writes him: "I dont think the College would rally from the blow your leaving would give it for ten years. Already, I have heard one mother say, 'If Dr. Hatcher is going away I don't think my boy can go to Richmond College.' "

Upon a repeated invitation from the Walnut Street Church he visited Louisville, leaving Richmond on Jan. 6th. Among the members of the Walnut Street Church were Drs. John A. Broadus, and Basil Manly of the Theological Seminary. He preached for the Church on Jan. 9th on "Jacob," a sermon which he had preached on the previous Sunday to his own church and which became one of his most popular character sermons.

While in Louisville he received from his deacons in Richmond an appeal to him that he would not leave Grace Street. This appeal, however, was not signed by all the deacons. One of the absentees was unable to be present at the meeting. "The others, who were absent, I am not advised as to the reason" writes Deacon Browne. "The resolutions were adopted unanimously and cordially. Dont decide the matter until your return."

He returned to Richmond, but made no announcement upon his arrival. At home we kept him busy telling us about his visit and his pictures sometimes made our mouths water for Louisville.

Louisville presses its plea. Mr Junius Caldwell writes him from Louisville:

"You are often inquired about most anxiously since you left and there is but one tone to the question, 'Have you heard

Digitized by Google

from Brother Hatcher?' and that is followed by words of emphasis 'Oh; I do hope he will come.' We have not heard a word from you since you were here."

Mr. Caldwell then goes on to say that the church would either give him $1000 for moving expenses or that they would—if he would prefer it—be glad to give him an amount which he thought would meet his probable expenses. He then continues:

"We are remembering you in our prayer meetings. Brother Hatcher, my heart gets so full of your coming and of the work which I think God has for you to do here that heart throbs and tears almost overwhelm me. Do not disappoint us by declining our call."

For over a month the suspense continued. Letters came from different parts of Virginia urging him to remain at Grace Street. He stated, the latter part of January, that he would announce, on the next Sunday, his decision regarding the Louisville call. No one knew what it would be and anxiety sat upon the faces of the congregation as they gathered on that day. He preached the sermon but their ears were waiting for something else. When the sermon reached its close he said, in substance:

"As you know, for many weeks I have held under anxious consideration a call to the pastorate of the Walnut Street Baptist Church of Louisville. I have after long and earnest and prayerful deliberation decided to decline the call."

The suspense was over and the strain was ended. One of the members arose and said: "Brethren and sisters; to our great joy our pastor has declined the flattering call from Louisville and decided to remain as our pastor. I think it would be a fitting thing for the church and congregation assembled to express now their happiness over his decision and also their purpose to sustain him in his future work and that we do this by extending to him our hand of brotherly greeting."

Out from the choir rang the hymn "Blest be the tie that binds" and up the aisles poured the congregation and for a

Digitized by Google

half hour the people thronged about the pulpit, grasping the pastor's hand, beaming at him their love and mingling their songs, their tears and their smiles in happy confusion.

Not all the men joined in that ovation at the first. One deacon held back and many eyes were on him. After awhile, he followed the others and moved up the aisle and extended his hand to the pastor. Thus the list was made complete and the response was unanimous.

"Dr. Hatcher" said Mrs. Taylor after it was all over and the congregation was melting away "I am going to take Mrs. Hatcher home in my buggy."

"Yes; take her" he replied with a smile "she has cried so much here this morning that she is not fit to walk along the street."

He sent his letter of declination to Deacon Junius Caldwell, with whom he had had the correspondence in connection with the call, and he inclosed the following personal letter to him:

"Richmond, Jan. 30th, 1881.

"My Dear Bro. Junius:

"Almost persuaded—but, after all constrained to say that I cannot come. I did my best to see my way to Louisville; my heart yearned for you and I was ready to come, but at the last I had to decline.

You and McFerran will despise me, I fear, but I mean to love you, both, all my days. I cannot have the honor of being the pastor of Walnut Street, but I can love and honor the church as long as my life lasts. Here is the fatal letter. It cost my anguish to pen it, but I had to do it.

Write me a line saying that in your warm soul there is compassion even for me and I will love you better then ever. I know you can find a better man and that is my consolation.

"Tell Mrs. C that I will ever cherish the memory of her sisterly kindness.

"Hastily yours,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

Digitized by Google

On the next Tuesday evening his door bell rang and, to his surprise, in came a flood of people—his Grace Street members—who wished to express their grateful joy to their pastor and his wife over his recent decision to remain with them. Col. T. J. Evans made a speech to the pastor on behalf of the members, in which he said: "All over Virginia men, women and children are delighted to know that Dr. Hatcher will not leave his native state where his influence is unsurpassed by any minister in the denomination to which he belongs." The glad outburst on the part of his church was to him a bright omen. He felt that in deciding against Louisville he had practically decided against all other fields and had committed himself to Richmond for the remainder of his life and with this conviction he took up his pastoral duties with a new and eager grasp.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

1881.

HIS SUNDAYS. PREACHING. PUBLIC PRAYERS.

His Sundays were his mountain-top days. He greeted its morning light with a song and bounded out of bed eager to meet its many tasks. When we children began to scamper off to Sunday School about nine o'clock we would generally leave him walking up and down the sitting room "studying his sermon" and, yet, calling out his cheery "good bye" to us as we passed through the room, or through the hall. Most frequently, in the open weather, we would leave him walking on the front porch and as a goodly procession of his Grace Street people filed by his gate every Sunday morning, enroute to Sunday School, he had to divide his time between reviewing his sermon and bowing his "good morning" to his own flock, as well as to nearly every other passer by. Each one received his greeting and, frequently, some friendly word attached thereto. This breezy touch with the people at the gateway of his Sabbaths seemed to refresh and quicken him. In fact, folks were interesting to him always and everywhere. About ten o'clock he would start for the church; about 10-25 he would come into the Sunday School and his entrance kindled many an eye. He would usually come as the entire school was assembling for its closing service and his walk up the aisle was slow and punctuated with greetings and hand shakes along the way. Faces would light up as different ones reached for his hand and received his salutation.

But up stairs in the auditorium;— Ah, there he stepped upon his throne. There he stood in the presence of his people

Digitized by Google

and of the great congregation; and his morning audience was a sight to behold,—radiant, eager eyed, full of love for their pastor.

He was so real, so bereft of self consciousness, so devout and so joyously worshipful that his spirit was contagious and uplifting, and he was interesting from the moment he entered the pulpit. The sight of his congregation fired his heart and the privilege of preaching was for him a taste of heaven. His soul literally plunged into the service with exultant rapture and reveled in its features of song and prayer, of scripture and sermon.

Richmond was a way-station between the North and South, and Grace Street was a rendevous for many of Richmond's distinguished travelers. Often would he lay hold of a visiting minister and press him into service for a sermon. He was a very sympathetic listener. I have often seen his face fairly beam with delight as he sat on the pulpit intently listening to some visiting preacher's sermons that did not seem to impress the congregation deeply, but which would find responsive chords in his heart and elicit his grateful appreciation. I remember a minister from the West being picked out of his congregation one morning by him. A stranger he was, but the pastor's eye summed him up and he decided that he could safely open the gates of his pulpit to him. He preached and the pastor was filled with happiness over his sermon. The congregation may, or may not, have felt the same as he did. At any rate nothing would do for the pastor but that the visitor—a Mr. Cameron, I think,—should preach again that evening and the evening sermon put the pastor again on the hilltops of pleasure.

Dr. C. H. Dodd, now of Germantown, Penn,. who later came to be one of Dr. Hatcher's dearly loved friends, had in his church in one of his former pastorates a man who traveled into the South every winter. "He would always go to hear Dr. Hatcher when he would stop in Richmond" said Dr. Dodd. "That seemed to be one of the important events of his Southern trip, and he would always come to me and give me Dr. Hatcher's

Digitized by Google

sermons and, in this way, even before I formed Dr. Hatcher's acquaintance, I came to know him and to receive impressions of his greatness." All classes were represented in his audience. There were the poor, those of moderate income and there were also those highly favored, not merely in worldly goods, but also in intelligence and culture. His eastern aisle was known as the "literary aisle." Here sat Drs., A. B. Brown, H. H. Harris, Col. Thos. J. Evans and others. He generally brought someone home with him to dinner on Sundays and as some of the children generally had guests, the Sunday table presented a lively scene and the most enthusiastic one in the party was the gentleman at the foot of the table.

But "time's up" would soon sound from his lips at the dinner table, and off to the Boy's Meeting we would go. After the meetings, he was either hidden away in his study for work on his night's sermon,—that is after the disappearance from the study of the clump of boys who usually followed him from the meeting, or else, he would jump in his buggy and whip up "Grace" in the direction of some other church in the city.

Sometimes supper would be picked up at one of the near by homes of his members and then came the night service,—not usually as largely attended as that of the morning,—and yet the night service held high rank in the life of his church. There were so many special occasions, Anniversary services and the like, that were held at night that there was not much lowering of the tide in these second services. "608 W. Grace" generally had some droppers in on Sunday nights after church. The girls could, as a rule, be depended on to provide for the back parlor a chattering bunch of beaux and up stairs the "older folks" came together; Dr. Hatcher would settle into an easy chair and tell the others to "talk on" and the genial chit-chat would ripple along; the visitors would, after a while, disperse and the Sunday paper would be brought to him. "My Sunday is over now" he would say "and I will read the paper." Thus his Sundays would go trooping by and golden days they

Digitized by Google

were for him and for multitudes of others who walked with him in the way.

The crowning joy of his life was preaching. He was so grateful to God for having chosen him to be a preacher that he said: "I thank him now and will thank him when I reach the throne and will thank him forever more." To the end of his days it seemed to hurt him if a Sunday passed when he could not preach.

He used neither manuscript, nor notes, in the pulpit, He was very deliberate in the beginning and his first sentences were crisp and striking. These opening sentences, so carefully constructed, were harbingers of good things to come. Having thus gained the ear of the audience at the commencement he would carry them with him to the end. His sermons generally worked their way to a climax. His own soul seemed to grow and climb with his sermon. It fed itself on the bread of life which he was giving to others and, when he would come to the end, he would be standing on the heights, and his audience would be with him. "The flights on which he took his hearers, as he started towards heaven in his preaching, seemed to me little short of translation. As I write I hunger to hear him" writes Rev. J. V. Dickinson. In the beginning of the sermon his appeal was purely to the intellect and his opening words were given ample time for grappling the minds of the congregation. His voice, while often a little husky, was so rich in sympathy and character that it immediately commanded a respectful hearing. When he would, in preaching, appeal to his audience, using the word "Brethren", the word would have in it a wealth of meaning. When he would arise in a Convention and call out "Brother Mod-e-ra-tor" the two words would roll out with a certain melody and individuality that would compel attention and win a favorable hearing. It is not easy to describe his voice, but it seemed to say to the listener that if he would only give heed that it had much that was valuable to be heard. His preaching was textual. Instead of selecting subjects to preach about he selected texts and he gathered all

Digitized by Google

of the sermon out of the text. What he said of Dr. Jeter's preaching was true of his own, viz:— he literally picked his text to pieces and gave it to the people. Regarding the text, he says to young preachers:

"Do not take it as a thing to hang your wobbling and variant thoughts upon. Do not make a base of it from which you can sprint in every direction and then dash back at certain turns merely to touch it; also, do not make it a vase in which to stick the gaudy flowers of your rhetoric. Do not preach on your text as if you were trying to batter it into the ground nor about it as if you were besieging it to open its barred gateway, nor from it as if you were having a target practice with the text as the bull's eye which you hope perchance sometimes to hit.

"Quietly unlock the text and walk into it, as into a store room, and get out the best of its contents and come out with them to the people,—something for each one in his season. Do that, brother, and that will be preaching.

"We often hear one preacher ask another how he treated a certain text. That was a very delicate question to ask most preachers. . . It is really hard to treat a text in a gentlemanly way. It is a great temptatiom to take advantage of it. Often we are more anxious to put things into a text than to get things out of it. Whenever a preacher gets to a point where he will let a text talk and he will listen he is very liable to make a good sermon."

He would in his preaching generally mention the varying views of commentators about a passage and then would give his own view and I know one boy who used to listen eagerly, each Sunday, for these different interpretations and who would always think that the preacher's interpretation was nearer the mark than that of any of the others.

He was never violent in his gestures and he had a horror of "ranting" or "yelling" in the pulpit. There was in his delivery a poise and self mastery that prevented such madness, and yet, as his heart would catch fire from his sermon, his whole being would be aglow and his voice would ring out with passionate earnestness. But such outbursts were not spasmodic;

Digitized by Google

but were usually the breaking of a storm that had been gathering during his sermon.

He rarely went ahead of his hearers in the expression of his emotions. There would be times, however, when he would set free the fire that was in his soul, and his words would blaze with passion. He thus writes:

"It is fatal to a public speaker's success to be too much carried away with his subject. We have known men whose emotions were easily moved and could not speak without being overmastered by their feelings. It was impossible for them to command the respect of an audience. . . . It rarely adds to his effectiveness to cry and yet there must be about him those signs of restrained passion which make the people feel that if he were to cry it would be a cyclone. The world reveres the man with unused resources.

"Of course times come when all that is in a man must be put out. There are great battles when reinforcements must be called from every quarter, when the last reserve must be thrown to the front and when the supreme struggle for the victory is to be made."

In picturing a preacher throwing all his reserves to the front in a final attack he says:

"Let his charmed soul be turned loose; let his voice roar like the cataract, let his nerves tingle and burn with contagious fire. Let all the light of his mind and heart break forth, let his eyes flow like rivers, let his face be as red as the sun and let him, like the French Emperor, call out his Imperial Guard, charge with resistless fury and sweep the field with victory."

Ofttimes such climaxes in his sermons would gather about an illustration; at any rate it was rare that his sermon did not contain at some pivotal point in the discourse a story, and usually it was only one and that gathered from his own experience. This page out of his own experience was generally the sermon's masterpiece and seemed born for that particular occasion.

He might be hurried in the other parts of the discourse but never with the story. There he played the artist and who,

Digitized by Google

that ever heard him paint those pictures would not testify to their beauty and power.

For the stock anecdotes he had a horror and his lips would not touch them. Of such anecdotes he said, "They, like David, have served their generation and should fall on sleep." His own ministry teemed with rich incidents and they swarmed about him for his use.

His character sermons were his best. Dr. John A. Broadus, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said to his class in Homiletics, "Dr. Hatcher ought to publish a volume of his sermons on Bible characters; it would be the most unique thing in Sermonology."

He could analyze a person and could paint his picture with startling vividness. The Bible characters lived before his own mind and in his preaching he simply pulled aside the curtain that his audience might see what he saw. But he was not so much the portrait painter that stood off asking his audience to look upon a picture; he was rather the intimate companion that brought into your presence one of his friends and before you knew it you were listening to that person talk.

"He would take a Bible character, or scene, or miracle and go to talking about it just as if it were true," says Rev. J. E. Cook.

"You almost take off your hat as he introduces you to Martha. You begin to scrape off the mud and shout as you get out of the horrible pit. You will know Joseph the secret disciple the rest of eternity."

Dr. P. T. Hale writes:

"I remember hearing him once, in Washington City, preach on "Martha of Bethany". Years before, I had visited the town of Bethany, but I could not then realize that Martha and Mary and Lazarus had ever been there, but I saw them all during that wonderful sermon, while Dr. Hatcher described their home. I could see the eager face of Martha, as she looked out of the window, and I saw Jesus coming with His disciples to her home for dinner! I could see the fluttering robe of the Master as He drew near the home of these cherished friends."

Digitized by Google

In his character sermons he would usually select, not the entire life of the individual, but simply some crucial incident in his life. In his notable sermon on Lot he chose the act of Lot in pitching his tent towards Sodom and his sermon hinged on the words "towards Sodom."

The text was "And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent towards Sodom." It was not in wicked Sodom that Lot moved with his family—Oh never! The mere suggestion of such a move would have been to Lot an insult. His new home was planted in the "cities of the plain." "Very true" said the preacher "but it was *towards* Sodom." The climax came in the picture of the doom of Sodom, the piteous efforts of Lot to save his family, the hasty flight, the burning city, the tragic death of his wife and his own disastrous end.

"William Eldridge Hatcher, taken all in all, easily stands in the front rank of American Baptist preachers."

These words were written in the "Chicago Standard" by Rev H. T. Louthan—but of himself Dr. Hatcher wrote:

"Oh why do not men preach. What is the matter with us. I take up the lament of Jeter, one of the greater men of the South, 'O that I could preach; I cannot preach; I have never preached; my heart fails me lest I quit the earth without ever preaching a worthy sermon.' "

His public prayers were unique. I was always impressed with the manner in which he used his mind in his prayers. Of course they had fervor, because his hearty interest in the entire service, the sermon, the hymns, etc., kept the fire burning in his soul from beginning to end, but, while his heart was glowing with feeling, his mind was equally active and his prayers were vibrant with thought. He carried his people and their burdens on his brain as well as on his heart, and his public petitions were mental structures. He had, one morning, in his service a distinguished visitor, Dr. Henry G. Weston, president of Crozer Seminary, who, many years afterwards, wrote him regarding his visit:

"May I tell you what it was that gave you such a place in my heart?

Digitized by Google

"Twenty years or more ago I spent a Sunday in Richmond. In the morning service I attended your church. I do not remember your text, or your sermon; but I was greatly struck by your prayer. It was a model prayer for a pastor to offer as he leads the devotions of his church. I have been accustomed to refer to it as such. I had heard of you as the most influential pastor in Richmond. That prayer explained to me why you held that position. As a prayer in that place and at that time it was simply perfect. . . . In that prayer of yours I saw what kind of pastor you were, what you were to your people and what your people were to you."

"Yours gratefully

"Henry G. Weston."

Concerning short prayers he thus expressed himself:

"No, we don't like that either. Dont like what? We dont like anybody to ask a brother to offer a word of prayer. To ask a man to say a hasty word to the Lord belittles prayer. If you want a man to offer a short prayer then pick out a short-prayer man. If the time is limited excuse the long winded brother for that occasion or else take your own medicine and do the short prayer yourself. When a brother asks us to make a short prayer we get scared at once lest we go beyond his notion of shortness and we feel that the congregation is watching us to see how long we will take. It gets to be a habit with some preachers to ask for brief prayers or 'a word of prayer'. We do not like it. At the same time, dear long winded suppliants, take not this as a vindication of you."

He made his Sunday services entertaining. There was a bouyancy and joy in the exercises. One of his members, Mr. J. D. C————, in speaking of the church services, says, "I never knew what he would do or say next. He kept me on the lookout for what was coming. He was intensely interesting."

It was not that he had various schemes for attracting his congregation; but he was so real, so free from self consciousness, so fresh and spontaneous in his direction of the public service, that he naturally kept his audience awake and on the qui vive.

The above named gentleman Mr. C————, when he began coming to the church, used to sit up in the side gallery, at the end just over the pulpit, and therefore at the longest

Digitized by Google

distance from the pulpit. Dr. Hatcher said to him in his later years, when he had become an active member and was always at the front in the services, "Jim, I had to preach you all the way down that gallery and then down the stairs and then up the aisle here to the front, before I could get you where I wanted you." He had a habit while seated in the pulpit of letting his eyes run over his audience as if he was getting acquainted with them individually and by the time he arose to preach he knew pretty well whom he had before him. Such a personal interest in his people followed him out of his pulpit as well as into it. To the above mentioned member he jocularly said: "Jim, you are mighty mean, but I like you because of the man that I think you may become." He came to cherish this gentleman—now a very useful layman—and also his wife, as among his beloved friends.

He had scant patience with dulness in a religious meeting. For example, one Sunday afternoon, the latter part of March, he went over to Manchester to attend a Missionary meeting. Dr. McDonald was expected to speak, but failed to appear. "Brother McDonald is not present" droned out the chairman and a solemn disappointment struck the audience. "I do not know why Brother McDonald is not present, but he is not here, and we are all very sorry that he is not here."

"Brother Chairman" said Dr. Hatcher rising in his seat and speaking with a little fire in his voice, "I desire to prefer charges against Dr. McDonald because of his absence this afternoon and to ask that he be summoned to appear before the next meeting of this Society to show cause why he should not be prosecuted for failing to appear at this meeting. Let me add this, Mr. Chairman, and that is that I am willing, when the the case comes up before the Society, to act as prosecuting attorney."

The solemn crust of the meeting was broken, the audience put in good humor and the current of the meeting rippled along in brighter fashion.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

1882.

EDITOR RELIGIOUS HERALD. IN THE SOCIAL CIRCLE.
THE CARAVAN. THE BAPTISTS.

He went, during the Summer, out among the mountains of Southwest Virginia and, among other things, he spoke on Education at the Lebanon Association. Out in the crowd that day was a boy who, many years afterwards, thus wrote in the Herald regarding that Association:

"Dr. Hatcher made a speech about Richmond College that awakened in me a desire and purpose to go to that institution. Ah that time I was not prepared to enter College and there were no apparent means for carrying out my purpose. . .The impression of that speech and the longing it awakened never left me for a day."

The result was that the boy found his way to Richmond College. "Soon after my arrival at Richmond College" he writes "I met the man who had inspired the ambition which had brought me there."

This youth, H. W. Williams, now an honored Baptist pastor in one of the Southern states, has already been mentioned in these pages in connection with Dr. Hatcher's croquet playing at the College.

He received, in November, a call to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Greenville S. C. In fact in the following years of his life he received many calls to attractive positions, but Richmond held him fast. Early in 1882 he received an invitation that opened to him a wide door of opportunity. He

Digitized by Google

was asked to become one of the editors of the Religious Herald, the Baptist state paper of Virginia. The prospect attracted him and when at his church meeting he asked the consent of his church to his undertaking this extra work he said:

"I am now forty eight years of age; I mourn to think that so much of my life has passed and that so little has been accomplished. I know not how much of my life remains, but I do have an overmastering desire to put into these remaining years as much service for my Master as possible."

I remember nothing else he said that night about the Herald work except the above paragraph, which startled me at the time by the manner in which it was said. I went home from the meeting saying to myself, "My father is surely anxious to hurry up and get in all the work he possibly can before he dies."

The circle of his influence was now greatly widened and there were hundreds and probably thousands who watched eagerly for his writings week by week.

"A more facile pen, or a more fertile brain than his we do not know among our Southern Baptist preachers," said the Baptist Courier in speaking of him. It also added "If there is a more racy and more piquant religious editor we have not yet made his acquaintance."

He aimed to spend sometime at the Herald office every day. This office was, to a certain extent, Baptist headquarters for Richmond and here, day by day, he was brought in touch with Baptists from different parts of the country; all manner of subjects and questions were fired at him for his columns. For example one lady sent the request, "Ask Dr. Hatcher if he would advise me to send my children to a dancing school." He published the question and added his reply, which was as follows:

"Well sister, that depends on several things. If your main idea is to fit them for worldly pleasure and make them popular with fashionable people, we would think it desirable for you to

Digitized by Google

have them taught dancing. They would feel very awkward in such society unless their feet had been properly educated. Then, it may be that you would find it easier to educate the heels than the heads of your children. Besides, if you would have them trained to dance and then they should become fond of it, as they probably would, you would find that it would be a great advantage in the way of preventing them from being troubled in mind on the subject of religion.

"But, possibly you might some day wish to have them become christians and join the church. If you think you would ever feel this way about it then in the name of the Lord we beg you not to put them into the hands of some empty headed dancing master. A dancing Baptist is a burden to the church and a grief to the pastor and rarely helps the cause except by waltzing back into the world."

He suffered a stunning blow in the resignation of Dr. Henry McDonald and his removal from Richmond. Like twin souls they had been linked in royal fellowship for several years. There seemed to be love in his very pronunciation of the word, "M-c.-D-o-n-a-l-d" The cares and ills of earth might crowd their path but they would fling them to the winds and revel in each other's company. To take 'McDonald' in his buggy for a ride into the country, on a Saturday afternoon, was medicine, and a feast. What cared they for the world's rude shocks as they turned "Grace's" head towards Manchester and Chesterfield, cracked the whip and went spinning across the James river bridge and—as they went—telling out their bothers, recounting their joys, their plans and their hopes for this life,—and sometimes for the life to come. "His departure is bitterness to me" he writes "for it tears me asunder from one who for years has been the keeper of my soul's secrets and my counselor" Be it remembered that in addition to his pastoral, editorial and general Denominational work in Richmond he was constantly "on the run" in Virginia and often in other states. Nearly every Summer he supplied churches in New York. It was at this time that he spoke at the Social Union in New York and preached in Brooklyn.

Digitized by Google

A New York writer, in the National Baptist, says:

"Dr. Hatcher, of Richmond, is the new sensation. He came unheralded and, at our Social Union, made a charming speech full of facts, good sense and mother wit. He preached in Brooklyn . . . . . and since then several of our strongest churches are eager to secure him as a supply."

He took part in an important discussion at the Southern Baptist Convention in Greenville in May. There was a contest between the cities of Marion and Atlanta and the question at issue was as to whether the Home Mission Board should be moved from Marion to Atlanta. Dr. Hatcher favored Atlanta and in his speech he said "Marion may be a good place to raise children in but if the Home Mission Board proposes to do business for the Lord it ought to be moved to a city like Atlanta."

"There were other speeches on both sides" says Dr. E. E. Folk, "but I think that the speech of Dr. Hatcher, more than that of any other one, determined the large majority by which the Convention voted to move the Board from Marion to Atlanta."

In the social circle he was usually the central figure. "Nothing exasperates people more" said Dr. Johnson "than superior brilliancy of one in conversation. They seem pleased at the time, but their envy makes them curse him in their hearts." That was true in Dr. Johnson's literary circle where he roared like a lion and ruled like a king. Goldsmith, Garrick and the others in that famous coterie acknowledged the brilliant sway of the old Philosopher but he knew full well what it meant for some of them to applaud him in his flashes of wit and curse him afterwards in their envy. But on the other hand Oliver Wendell Holmes was the charm of the social circle as well as its shining centre.

Dr. Hatcher was an illustration of the fact that one could be a favorite in a social group and a beloved companion at the same time. He did not seek prominence when thrown with

Digitized by Google

others, but there was in him a sunny disposition and a jovial spirit, and his conversation had such an originality and sparkle in it that the members of the circle generally found themselves listening when he spoke. "The art of talking" says Dr. Holmes "is one of the fine arts,—the noblest, the most important and the most difficult." It was rare that Dr. Hatcher talked simply to be interesting and he did not give the impression of aiming at effect. "Those were feasting hours for me" said a young preacher referring to certain times when he sat in a social group in a home in which Dr. Hatcher was visiting.

Dr. M. B. Wharton refers to conversations that several of us enjoyed in his room in Norfolk with Dr. Hatcher as one of the group.

"O what a time we had! He was the autocrat and we listened, we laughed, sometimes we yelled. It was good for the health of all; more beneficial in its results than a Summer vacation, if it could only have been kept up long enough. We were so sorry when he had to leave. Going about my work I have frequently yet to stop and laugh at his jokes and the way he told them. I want him to write a book of his experiences. It would be the best selling book I know of. He has a vein of humor as rich as it is rare."

Notwithstanding the remark of Mr. Humphrey Wagstaff that the life of man is too short for a story teller, Dr. Hatcher would often tell a story, but,—mark it well reader—it was not the threadbare tale, nor the stock anecdote, nor was he like those conversationalists which Collins says remind him of hand organs;—"We have heard all their tunes." His stories were nearly always plucked fresh from his own experience and it was in telling them that he played the artist. His stories were pictures with as few strokes as possible. He frequently criticised certain conversationalists for their tedious drawing out of their illustrations and for allowing their listeners to anticipate them.

It is in conversation, more than in public addresses, that the real man is seen. That indefinable something, which we call

Digitized by Google

magnetism, belonged to Dr. Hatcher and it made men draw their chairs around his close enough to hear when he began to talk. But he was also a good listener. I remember going with him one evening during his later life into a home with several invited guests and where the parents had told their son that Dr. Hatcher was one of the great conversationalists of the day and that a rich treat was in store for him. Among the guests were two much younger preachers, who held the center of the stage during most of the evening, keeping up an animated colloquy, while Dr. Hatcher gave quiet attention with only occasion incursions into the conversation.

A brilliant conversationalist is difficult to find. "With thee conversing, I forget all time" says Milton, and Longfellow declares "a single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years of study of books."

Dr. Hatcher by his patient drill had gained such a mastery of words that, not only in public addresses and in literary productions, but in ordinary conversation he used words that clung to the memory. I have been startled since his death by the number of people who remember things he said in casual talks with them. Whenever at this day I meet one who begins to speak of him it seems that nearly always the person says "I remember that the first time I ever met Dr. Hatcher he said"—and then follows some remark of his that had so impressed the hearer at the time by its brightness, or good sense, or humor, or quaintness, that it had stuck fast in his mind.

A simple and recent illustration of this may here be mentioned: At a dining a few days ago a lady, to whom I had been introduced, said: "The first time I met Dr. Hatcher, he asked me if I was married, and when I told him 'No,' he said, 'Well, there is some blockhead walking around over the earth.' "

Concerning Edmund Burke Dr. Johnson said that no man of sense could meet him under a gateway to avoid a shower without being convinced that he was the very first man of England.

Digitized by Google

"If he should go into a stable and talk a few minutes with the hostlers about horses they would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here." "Goldsmith wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll." Dr. Johnson was such a belligerent talker that he brooked no rival; "if his pistol missed fire he knocked down his antagonist with the butt of it." Old Thomas Carlyle, as a conversationalist, was built very much on the same pattern. He would not only object and question and contradict, but, ofttimes, with his loud tones and vehement manner, would bear down all opposition before him.

During the next Summer Dr. Hatcher gathered a party of Baptist preachers and laymen for a journey by private conveyance across the mountains into Southwest Virginia to a remote section, where the Baptists were scattered and weak. He styled the party "The Caravan" and they went to attend the New Lebanon Association. "The Caravan" said he. . . "moved out of Glade Spring on the morning of the 23rd of August and turned its face towards the far away hills of Russell"

A jovial party it was as it jolted and laughed its way over the mountains, and their happy chats and swelling music brightened the ride and left their echoes in the vales. At one o'clock the horses were reined in and the travelers alighted in a grove of sugar maples.

"A kind old bachelor farmer, Mr. Robert Cummings, had compassion on the jaded travelers" said Dr. Hatcher "and brought out chairs, glasses and milk and there on the shaded lawn we had a happy picnic."

The most interesting sight to him, however, was the old man himself,—living alone there in the mountains. He engaged him in conversation, thereby bringing out the fact that he was unmarried. "Wifeless and alone, the dear old man was" said Dr. Hatcher "and the bare suggestion of matrimony crimsoned his cheek with blushes, but the memory of his handsome treatment of the Caravan will henceforth seal my lips, when I am tempted to cut at the crustiness of old bachelors. As the golden tints of the setting sun were dying into early

Digitized by Google

twilight the Caravan swept down the long rocky hills and found itself in Lebanon."

This visit of the "Brethren from the East" at the New Lebanon marked an epoch with the little mountain Association. Happy hours of fellowship were spent, sermons and addresses delivered by these brethren and a warm invitation extended to the New Lebanon brethren to come to the General Association in Richmond on the next November and be the guests of the Richmond Baptists. But this was not all. As the salaries of the pastors in that mountain section were wofully meager, arrangements were made for paying their expenses to the Richmond Convention on the next Fall. Dr Hatcher wrote in the Herald regarding the Association:

"The Metropolis [Richmond] may look for a stalwart delegation from the New Lebanon and I now bespeak for them entertainment as cordial and cheerful as that which they have so nobly extended to the brethren from the East. The New Lebanon Caravan must have good quarters when it reaches Richmond."

He was in his element in that mountain Association as he was seeking to make the visit of the Caravan cheering and helpful to the New Lebanon brethren. Dr. C. L. Cocke wrote that Dr. Hatcher's sermons and addresses "excited great enthusiasm." He sought to strengthen the tie between the Baptists of the Southwest and those of the other section of the state and in this hope he was not disappointed. This desire to bring the Baptists of different sections to know and love each other better showed itself also in his attitude towards his northern Baptists brethren. It has already been told in these pages how quick he was to extend the hand of Christian fellowship to his Northern brethren after the Civil War, with all its bitterness, had closed. Often in his home he would extend warm-hearted hospitality to northern visitors in Richmond. On one occasion—it must have been a few years before this time—a large New England Baptist Excursion was run into the South.

Digitized by Google

They stopped over in Richmond and were given a welcome service at the First Baptist Church. The front seats in the church were reserved for the visitors, in number between seventy-five and one hundred. A wonderfully cordial greeting was accorded to the visitors who expressed their grateful delight but probably the most striking picture in the scene was that of Dr. Hatcher standing on the lower platform after one of the Northern brethren had expressed his amazement and pleasure at the christian welcome which they were receiving. Dr. Hatcher lifted his hand in emphatic gesture saying to the New England brethren in front of him: "If you are surprised at this demonstration of christian love for you, our brethren of the North, let me say to you that there is not a section of Virginia where you could not be given a similar expression of fraternity."

One fact that kindled his interest in the people at that association in Southwest Virginia was that they were Baptists. It is very true that he joined forces with every Protestant denomination and hailed their members as his brethren in Christ. But for his Baptist people,—especially if they were isolated and beset by hardships and condemned to severe struggling,—he had a special place in his heart.

"One thing we may be sure of" he once said "the future will be peopled with Baptists. If the enginery of the past has failed to exterminate the Baptists in their weakness, now that they are a great host and the old enginery is out of order, their worst enemies can hardly expect their extermination.

"Baptists are bound to live; they are on the programme of the ages and must be on hand to answer. The fact is they have a large contract on hand.—unfinished business—and they must stay over and attend to it.

With such an ambition about his denomination he put honor everwhere upon his Baptist brethren. These country Baptists touched his heart,—especially their old preachers. He paid them, at this time, a loving tribute, in the Herald, beginning with the words:

Digitized by Google

"The plain old preacher is always seen at the District Association."

After writing in kindly fashion about the old man, he thus continues:

"In a few fleeting years his Redeemer will take him home. Do not tread on him, nor push him coldly aside. When he comes give him the best seat; hear him with the best attention and gladden his old age with every possible deed of brightness and love."

At one of the Associations this Summer, the following incident as told by him occured:

"The other day we heard the plain old man make a speech at his Association. It was a rugged, noisy, stormy speech,—but it was the best the dear old saint could do. It had the one sanctifying merit of thorough earnestness. We confess we were touched by the spell of his power and forgot the blemishes that so palpably marked his effort. By accident our eye fell on a young man,—a prim and starched Collegian,—who has it in mind to be a minister and we were wounded to find him in a convulsion of merriment and laughter. He saw nothing in the old brother's tender and earnest manner to attract and move him."

This paragraph in the Herald had a curious sequel several month afterwards. One day a young preacher approached him and said in a somewhat angry tone:

"Dr. Hatcher, you wrote something against me in the Herald which I felt was a personal attack on me."

"Do tell me what it was, my young brother."

"That article you wrote about the young minister whom you saw laughing at the speech which an old preacher was making."

"Well, did you laugh at the old preacher?"

"Yes, I did, but I meant no harm by it; and besides I do not think you ought to have made a public example of me in that way."

After telling of the above conversation, Dr. Hatcher thus concluded, "We had only to say to the angry Collegian that he was not the man to whom we referred."

Digitized by Google

He loved young preachers but to the old he extended reverential and affectionate treatment. If the roll could be called of the old preachers in Virginia who were brought in touch with him during their later years, I believe their testimony would be unanimous that in William E. Hatcher they found a kindly and filial consideration that made them often lean upon him and that always made him a welcome visitor for them in Associational gatherings, in their home circles, or wherever they might meet.

One day, during the Summer while riding on the cars, "a hard cold faced man, with a cutting, bitter voice" came across the car and sat down by him and drew him into a chat. He was always glad of a neighborly conversation, while traveling on the train, but the look and manner of this man repelled him.

"I have lived on four continents,"said he, with an air of bravado "and I have seen the world on every side and I have found that there is no honor among men and no virtue among women."

"May I ask what is your religious belief?" ventured Dr. Hatcher.

"I believe that the Bible is a fraud and that there is nothing beyond the grave."

"Do you expect to perish at death as a common beast?"

"Yes."

"Ah well" replied Dr. Hatcher "If you expect to die as a beast, I cannot find fault if you live as a beast and if you think men and women are as soulless as a brute I cannot see why you should ever have supposed that there could be any honor among men or virtue in women."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVII

1882-1883.

PASTORAL VISITS AND PASTORAL EXPERIENCES. TRIP TO TEXAS AND MEXICO. DEATH OF THE TWINS. THE CARAVAN.

On his return, each Fall, from his Summer rovings he seemed to leap to his pastoral tasks with a new enthusiasm. "Capital days are these for pastoral visiting" he writes on Oct. 5th. "It is indeed a luxury to be abroad in this bracing Autumnal air." He gives in another place a breezy sketch of some of his trials in pastoral visiting:

"We know what it is to bang and rattle and wait at the front door and after so long a time to have the woman open the door and say with a light laugh that she heard the noise but thought it was Carlos which is one of the smartest dogs in the world trying to get in to the house. We know what it is to stand at the front gate with a big-tooth old growler on the inside and the woman cry out from the second story window, 'Why dont you come in. I hardly think the dog will bite.' We know what it is to come into the parlor and have a little black terrier get under our chair, bark and nibble at our calves while the woman of the house says, 'Why, Tip; why dont you stop, you are real bad today.' All this and more of hardship and cruelty we have borne in the discharge of pastoral duty and we are willing to stand the ills which the future may bring, but there is one depth of degradation to which we will not go. Women may have their pet dogs if they will. They may bring them into the parlor and we will be silent. They may hold them in their laps and hug and kiss them as they choose and we will be quiet. They may take their canine darlings with them on the streets and even to church and we will be tranquil and sober. But we draw the line deep and sharp on pet dogs. We will not

Digitized by Google

descend to the depths of cajoling and caressing a pet dog. On that point we are fixed. Pet dogs are spoiled, conceited and ever prone to excessive self assertion. They look upon human people as creatures designed to wait upon and provide for them. They always think they are superior to their own and some serious persons declare that in exceptional cases they have a good ground for thinking so. We will pet children, admire new houses and new furniture and rave appropriately over pictures and flowers. We will hear the oldest daughter play all of her exercises on the piano and listen to young John repeat his pretty little speech which his maiden aunt taught him. We will at the risk of dyspepsia eat the jelly, taste the fruit cake and stain our fingers with home made candy. Indeed we are in for the war and are willing to go as far as the next man in making it bright and agreeable to the fastidious and exacting saints of the earth, but there is a limit at which we put our foot down and defy all of the dog worshippers of the earth to shake us. Be it known that when the Lord called us to preach he did not mention the petting of pet dogs as one of our official duties."

A new friend came into his life at this time,—Dr. W. W. Landrum—who became Dr. McDonald's successor at the Second Baptist Church.

A Welcome Service was given Dr. Landrum, at which Dr. Hatcher delivered an address to the new pastor, which was not only published but awakened considerable comment. "On hearing it," said Dr. Landrum, "I determined to accep tit and live by it. . . It ought to have been published in a book. "The address began with the words:

"In coming from Augusta to Richmond you have changed your field, but not your work."

He closed as follows:

"You must pardon me for saying that it is with something of sadness that I see you take the place held for five years by my ever cherished and beloved McDonald. What a blessed and helpful friend he was to me. My soul has wept tears of blood at his going from me and I have not been able to pass this

Digitized by Google

church since he went without finding a cloud of sorrow gathering over my heart. But, my brother, I open my arms to you and so far as I can I am ready to help you."

His speaking engagements were varied. A Convention at this time secured him for a twenty minutes speech. The president announced: "We will now have an address by Dr. W. E. Hatcher, on 'The social element in Christianity.'"

Coming to the front, Dr. Hatcher began:

"Mirabile Dictu! What a colossal theme! I have the social element in me, but I cannot prove it by becoming familiar with this far-spreading topic within the fleeting period of twenty minutes and I most meekly implore our grave president not to dock me for the time already spent in announcing what I am to talk about. I must commit my frail bark to the uncertain seas, bidding adieu to illustrations and punctuation marks, steering straight for the main point and not knowing what moment I may fall beneath the blow of unfriendly fate."

Regarding the social element he said: "It is in Christianity, but it is not Christianity. The Social element is the servant of the King. It is the porter-girl who serves at the gate. She may deck herself in bright adorning and serve with winning courtesies, but we must see that strangers do not come to court the maid rather than honor the king."

In February he spoke at the Baptist Congress in Lynchburg and made an amusing comment on a speech by Dr. J. W. M. W————s who had said that preachers ought to put more variety in their order of exercises in their Sunday services and by such changes in the programmes fool the devil. Dr. Hatcher, after remarking that a good nap in church was better than being kept awake by the juggling antics of a sensational preacher then took up the Doctor's suggestion about outwitting the devil and said that while there were many hard things that might be said against His Satanic Majesty, yet they surely must admit one thing and that was that the devil was no fool. The manner in which he made this last remark brought down the house.

Digitized by Google

A new suit of clothes was presented to him by his ladies. Mrs. B. B. Van Buren, who was president of the organization that presented him with the suit, says:

"On the Sunday after Dr. Hatcher had received the suit I was sitting in a pew with Mrs. T————, a member of the society, who had been active in raising the money for the pastoral gift and she naturally felt great interest in it. When Dr. Hatcher came into the pulpit that morning he had on the new coat but he wore trousers of a different make. She began to twist and frown and seemed restless and uncomfortable and indignantly whispered to me:

" 'Just look at Dr. Hatcher; I dont believe he has on the trousers of our new suit.' No sooner was the service ended than this lady, who was a devoted friend and admirer of her pastor, hurried up to the pulpit platform where the pastor was busy shaking hands. She stood there in the group of people eyeing him so curiously—especially the lower half of him—that he drew back and began to eye her saying 'Well, what are you scanning me so closely for? What is the trouble?' She answered with a show of impatience: 'Why, Doctor, you have not got on our trousers.' 'Your trousers?' he replied with a burst of surprise. 'Mercy alive woman and do the very trousers that I wear belong to you?' "

During the Winter and Spring much of his time was occupied in speaking, writing, attending conferences, committee meetings, etc., and all this was in addition to his multitudinous pastoral duties. A trip to Waco, Texas, in May, to the Southern Baptist Convention made a sunny break in his crowded life. One day in the Convention Dr. ———— arose and said in substance: "Bro. Moderator, I move that it be declared the rule of this Convention that no collection shall be taken at the meetings of this Convention."

Dr. Hatcher arose to oppose the motion and Dr. E. E. Folk thus describes the incident:

"It was late at night when Dr. Hatcher got the floor in opposition to the resolution, but he held every member of the Convention in his seat until the close of his speech. In all my life I think I have never heard a speech quite so full of wit and

Digitized by Google

humor and ridicule and sarcasm. The Convention was constantly convulsed with laughter and completely converted to his way of thinking. At the conclusion of his speech, the sentiment of the Convention was evidently so overwhelming in opposition to the resolution that Dr. N———— arose and asked to withdraw it. This triumph of oratory was all the more remarkable because Dr. Hatcher was in the wrong, as every one since, including himself, has come to recognize."

His Waco visit added a bright new chapter to his life and also put Mexico on his programme.

From Waco he went with an excursion party of delegates, into Mexico and upon his return to Richmond he wrote about his journey and his pen must have been in playful mood.

"Be it known to all swelling tourists" he writes "that we have had a mild case of foreign travel. True, we did not go far, nor stay long, nor see very much, nor get much original matter out of the Mexicans. But this matters little. We have been abroad. We crossed the Rio Grande and tasted the rapture of seeing another country. It makes us feel expansive; it lifts us out of the untraveled herd and gives us a name and a rank among the great. No more will we sit, a wild-eyed simpleton, to admire the pompous airs of the man who has been. If we cannot cream our public addresses with 'When I was in Rome,' we can at least, hereafter, say with lofty majesty, 'During my somewhat extended sojourn in Monterey,' and we fancy that that will mightily thrill the popular ear."

The Texas-Mexico trip was of a variegated hue, and, as he said, "the bitter mingled with the sweet and trials jostled with our pleasures." For example, he wore a beaver hat,— but let him tell of the tragedy:

"It was a new hat; a costly beaver laid in for Waco;—the climax of fashion and fondly prized. That hat and Dr. Chaplin undertook to occupy the same seat in the car at the same moment. When we reached the scene Chaplin was serene but the hat was invisible. A crumbled wreck was our headgear for the rest of the way. But we never blamed the hat."

Other disasters were lurking for him on Mexican soil, one of which was his arrest by a Mexican officer.

Digitized by Google

"But the crisis of our misfortunes came" said he "when we fell a victim in the hands of the Mexican law with the tawny dwarf of a Mexican soldier escorting us through a public market. The ground of our abridged liberty was an alleged crookedness on our part in the purchase of a twenty five cent basket. We are pleased to report that we confronted our accuser and retired from the scene of the conflict with our basket swinging in peaceful triumph at our side. This did not prevent those venerable knights of the pencil, Col. Lawton of the Index and Dr. Caperton of the Western Recorder from laughing mightily at us in our calamity. Nor did it clip the pinions of the fast flying rumor that a Richmond editor had been before a Monterey court,—which same thing was happily untrue. We give it as our experience that it is a perilous thing for a man to buy baskets in an unknown tongue. We bought one and do not wish to increase our stock."

At his eighth pastoral anniversary in May his church membership was announced as being 928. He had at this time eight children—Eldridge, May, Orie, Kate, Elizabeth, Edith and the twins, Brantly and Elsie, who were just one year old.

The Summer brought a cutting sorrow for him. He had many hopes wrapped up in little Brantly and Elsie, With the Summer's heat came sickness and finally the little invalids were hurried off to the mountains, but at New Market, in Nelson County, they were stopped and the father was sent for. "At the dawn of Saturday morning" he writes "we found one dead, another extremely low and the rest stricken and crushed. Truly, a day of deep shadow that one might pray to forget. And yet it must abide in our memory, not only because hallowed by a sacred sorrow, but because brightened by the beautiful deeds of others."

It was a mournful journey that he made to Richmond where, in Hollywood, by lantern light, and accompanied by Drs. Landrum, Hawthorne and Shipman, the little body of Elsie was buried. Sad of heart, he turned his face towards the mountain to resume his Summer travels.

Digitized by Google

He met a gentleman with whom he was destined to be linked in royal friendship, Judge Jonathan Haralson and the meeting place was the Blue Ridge Springs. They were together for several days at the Springs and he seemed like a boy with a new treasure. They played ten pins, took walks and spent many hours in conversation.

He was still indulging golden dreams about little Brantly,—about his developement into boyhood and youth. But a bitter grief was in store for him. He thus writes:

"That night we slept in Liberty—No we did not sleep but through the weary night we lay with a new wound in our heart, asking for a helping smile from a chastening father. Another light on our path had gone out—another sweet hope was dead and in the gray dawn of the morning we quit Bedford with scarcely a thought of all that it contains of all that is precious to us. A day's lone journeying, and at eventide we stood beside the tiny white coffin in which our baby was asleep."

At the side of Elsie, in Hollywood, they laid Brantly.

He must bury his sorrow in his work and so in a short while he turns his face again towards the mountains.

The reader remembers the journey of the "Caravan" of the previous Summer when Dr. Hatcher and a party of preachers and laymen traveled into the mountains of Southwest Virginia to carry greetings to their brethren of the Lebanon Association. It had been decided to repeat the experiment and to organize a larger Caravan for the present Summer. Among those who joined the party were Drs. J. L. M. Curry, E. C. Dargan, C. L. Cocke, A. E. Owen and others, and it must have produced a little sensation in that Lebanon Association when these brethren from other portions of the state drove into their midst.

From Glade Spring he writes to his wife on Aug 17th:

"I am now in J. R. Harrison's study and Dr. ———— is preaching in the church very near to me. He is raving like a madman. His voice is broken and he is ranting his life out of

Digitized by Google

him. D———— has been doing some most violent ranting also and even S——— has been on a snort and much to his own regret. He says that he is going to cultivate a cooler manner. I am grieved and shocked by the useless and grating vehemence of our speakers. It is not the way to preach the gospel."

During the Association Dr. Hatcher preached and, at the close, an old sister expressed her elation over the sermon by indulging in a shout. Some of the delegates of the Caravan thought they discovered some humor in the episode and gave the following account of it:

"After Dr. Hatcher's sermon a collection was taken and the collectors reported that when the hat was passed to the lady who had made so much noise over the sermon she gave not a penny."

The Caravan considered this a great joke on Doctor Hatcher who replied:

"If it could be shown that the woman had any money and refused to give, the case would be suggestively melancholy, but it may have been that she had not even two mites."

Sunday marked the end of their stay at the Association.

"After preaching on Sunday morning" he writes "we set our faces eastward and after a crushing drive we reached Abingdon several hours in the night. Near the edge of the town and beneath the gleaming stars we came to a mournful pause—shook hands and adjourned the Caravan. Its broken fragments scattered away in the deep darkness, each going his own chosen path. In company with Owen and Kincannon we caught a passing train and at midnight were in Bristol.

"Adieu, adieu to the Caravan of 1883. It is numbered with the happy things that were. Even now its members are scattered afar and will not all meet again beneath the silver maples. But are there not trees, on some far off plain, where we shall meet again? Amen, so let it be."

To his wife he writes, "I was never so sad as I have been since Brantly's death. I did not love him any more than I did Elsie

Digitized by Google

but I had hopes of raising him. My heart has been sore." He returned to the Blue Ridge Springs for a few days and renewed his friendship with judge Haralson, concerning whom he writes in the Herald:

"God has given us many kind and loving friends and we can not cease to be grateful for them but we have not one in all the earth whom we love with a more clinging and trustful friendship than the Hon. Jon. Haralson of Selma, Alabama. He pleased us even unto vanity when he told us that he had been watching the trains every day for a week in the hope of pulling us off the cars as we came back from our mountain rambles. Not in appearance, but in voice, movement, spirit and general loveliness of character, he constantly reminds us of that other jewel of our heart, Dr. Henry McDonald. If the Judge will move to Virginia the Herald will nominate him for Governor."

He attended the Valley Association at the Mill Creek church in Botetourt County and here he had a little experience with a mountain boy that meant much for the boy. This lad's name was Robert Dogan, who, at this writing, is pastor of the Fulton Avenue Baptist Church of Baltimore City. On a Summer's day in 1883, in company with a few friends, he walked across the mountain to attend for the first time a Baptist Association. It was a great occasion for him and he thus describes his visit:

"Dr. Hatcher fairly charmed me by his eloquence and sparkling witticisms as he spoke in behalf of the Religious Herald [of which he was one of the editors.] I think I gave him my last dollar on a subscription to the Herald as I was anxious to read anything that such a man would write.

"After the adjournment we had gathered at a little railroad station near by. I was anxious to hear these learned men talk, so I stood at a respectful distance listening to the conversation which was interspersed with amusing jokes.

"While thus engaged, Dr. Hatcher left his companions, came to me and said: 'Boy, what is your name?' I was abashed and flattered that this great man should speak to me or take any notice of me. In a kind and gentle voice he asked me many

Digitized by Google

questions which I tried to answer to my best advantage. As the train rolled up he took me by the hand, looked kindly into my face and said: 'I am your friend and can help you in securing an education if you need me.' Then placing his hand tenderly on my shoulder he said 'Boy, I hope God will make a preacher of you some day.'

"Those words sounded to me like a prayer. They awakened in my soul a latent hope of something of which I had scarcely dared to dream before. The weight of that hand sent an impulse into my young life that has remained throughout the passing years. I was the happiest boy alive when about one year later, I wrote my name in the matriculation books at Roanoke College."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

1883.

COTTAGE FOR COUNTRY PASTOR. A CITY PASTORATE. CONVENTION AT BALTIMORE. ON THE WING. "ALONG THE BAPTIST LINES"

His vacation season,—so full of lights and shadows—melts away and he finds himself in Richmond at the gateway of another pastoral year. He preaches on "A Strike for Strangers" using the text in Matthew 22:9: "Go ye into the parting of the highways and as many as ye find bid to the marriage feast."

He set his heart upon securing a home for a country pastor whom he knew was struggling upon a meager salary. He wrote as follows in the Herald of Sept. 20th.

"Here is a pathetic item which we beg that all cold and narrow people will not read. They will not enjoy it and we prefer that they will jump over it and try the next paragraph.

"There is a certain Baptist preacher in Virginia who surrendered at Appomattox Court House with General Lee in 1865, after four years in the war, and who came home ragged and without a penny in his pocket. From that day he has been a country pastor, struggling along on a small salary—barely enough to keep him above the waves of debt."

He then proceeds to make an appeal for funds to purchase a Cottage for the pastor.

Every few weeks thereafter he would drop into his columns a little jotting about the "Cottage", and the result was that the appeal was heard, the contributions flowed in and at this date, Nov. 20th, 1914, this same preacher,—now too aged and infirm for the work of the pastorate which he last winter resigned—

Digitized by Google

is still living in the same "Cottage" which sprang into life and beauty through the kind efforts of his friend, Dr. Hatcher.

Once more it must be mentioned that the "disturbing element" in his church were still on his track and their opposition would often be discussed around our family fireside, after the children were in bed—though I know one child who often lingered around the hearth stone and with youthful indignation heard father and mother talk about the "troubles".

But he seemed confident that God had his work in hand. His life at this time was crowded with tasks of preaching, visiting, lecturing, dedicating churches, attending committee and Board meetings,—but how vain to attempt to catalogue all his goings and all his labors. He thus refers to the whirl and rush of a city pastorate:

"There is something in the glare, conspicuity and glamour of a metropolitan pastorate, but, Oh, the fret, the strain, the death of it all."

He is sounding an alarm to those young preachers who despise the small and unshowy pastorates and chafe and struggle for the prominent city churches:

"These high places" said he "are never wisely sought. They are tolerable only when they seek the man and even when they are held by an overstrain and lost by a breakdown. . . . Do not clamor for the heights; they are cold and slippery. If they need you up there they will call down for you and then you may go up, but do not be caught waiting at the bottom."

"Now churches are institutions. . . . . Once it was a sermon or two, on Sunday, a few calls during the week, but now it is services, committees, societies, clubs, entertainments, culture or literary classes, missions, charities, or what not almost every night. To guard, foster and develope these is the complicated care of the pastor. . . . His duties, like the mercies of God, are renewed unto him every morning and pursue him every night in his dreams.

"The day for the long haired, isolated, wild eyed preacher is past. It requires a real human being to be a preacher in these days.

Digitized by Google

"Gentlemen beware of that invisible jury which will ever have your case in hand and is liable to bring in its verdict any night while you are asleep and you may wake up next morning to receive your fate."

Notwithstanding his heavy strains his cheerfulness never forsook him. His sunny nature showed itself in his countenance, his conversation and in his varied activities. I remember that once, when as a boy driving with him in the buggy, and mymind was dwelling on the subject of "happiness" I asked him. "Papa, are you perfectly happy?" "Happy?" he said, as if he was hardly acquainted with the word. "Why my happiness comes from my work. If I am doing that, I am happy." His words and his manner of uttering then dropped a new idea into the mind of the boy at his side who up to that time had never thought of "work" and "happiness" as living together on such close terms. Says Carlyle "The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was happiness enough to get his work done." Carlyle went at his tasks with grim ferocity, but, alas, he had not the christian hope to light his pathway as he toiled. It was said of Cromwell however that "hope shone like a fiery pillar in him when it had gone out in all others." The sun of Dr. Hatcher's happiness rarely sank below the horizon.

"Away with those fellows who go howling through life and all the while passing for birds of Paradise", says Beecher . "He that cannot laugh and be gay should look to himself." It was this same preacher who said that some people go through life as a band of music passes down the street flinging melody and gladness on all sides. One of Dr. Hatcher's members wrote him "The very sight of you on the street at times when I have been burdened with care has been a blessing to me."

He drew happiness not only from his work, but he seemed to find it everywhere: "I have often said" he remarked "that my life has been a succession of pleasant surprises." His jovial spirits brightened his home. It was about this time that he had several Richmond College students living in his home and the

Digitized by Google

genial fun around the table mingled with his words of soberness and counsel. One of the young men, Rev. P. G. Elsom, in speaking of how Dr. Hatcher helped him by his "cheerfulness" said: "He could bring a smile to a tombstone. He gathered preachers often at his home and the merriment he would create was a feast to us boys." Dr, C. H. Dodd happily described him as "The man who made the years his friend."

The following editorial jotting from his pen seems to indicate that one of his sermons at this time had a narrow escape from shipwreck:

"It is easy to fail on a thoroughly prepared sermon. A headache, or a crying child, or a drowsy deacon, or a sultry morning, or a cold house, or an overheated house, or an empty house, or a bad liver, or a sleepless Saturday night, or a hoarse voice, or a grumbling tooth, or too much breakfast, or a hitch in the singing, or a squad of giggling young people in the gallery, or a fainting woman, or a rattling window, or a few ostentatiously late comers, or a blundering sexton, or an unmanageable cravat, or the ringing of the fire bells, or a thunder storm, or several other things, needless now to enumerate, may leap in upon the poor vessel of clay and knock the very marrow out of his sermon. In such cases let preachers have common sense and they may rise superior to such annoyances."

He delivered an address at the Social Union in Baltimore on April 10th on "The Southern Baptist Convention", and one month later in that same city, he attended the meeting of this Convention where we find him engaged in his favorite practice of lifting a brother over a rough place.

"At the conclusion of the evening service, Dr. W. E. Hatcher asked that a collection be taken to enable brother Langley to build a house of worship on his mission field in Florida; it was done and a handsome sum raised."

He also spoke in the Baltimore Convention on "The Church Building Fund" and Dr. Edward Bright, the editor of the New York Examiner, wrote that the address was "as fine a specimen of terse and vigorous English as he had ever heard."

Digitized by Google

Dr. Bright's visit to the Convention had an amusing sequel. It provoked a little editorial tilt between Dr. L———— and Dr. Hatcher, which came about as follows:

Dr. Bright was an eminent Baptist layman from the North and consequently the Convention in Baltimore accorded him an exceedingly fraternal welcome. The cordiality of the welcome touched his heart and his response was couched in warm, kindly tones.

There was one gentleman however,—Dr. L————, editor of the J———— and M————, a Northern publication,—who, as he read the account of the fraternal incident, thought that Dr. Bright's response to the Convention was "overdone,"—at any rate he said in his paper that Dr. Bright, in his speech to the Southern brethren, was feeding them on taffy.

Dr. Hatcher read the comment and he made the following response in the Herald:

"Dr. L———— intimates that Dr. Bright fed the Southern Baptists on "taffy".

"Taffy! Let us pause for reflection. What is taffy? Unluckily the word is not in our copy of Webster's Unabridged and so we are left at a disadvantage in deciding exactly what Dr. L———— is talking about. We happen to know that taffy is a confectioner's term and means molasses candy. Does Dr. L———— mean that Dr. Bright came down to Baltimore with his pockets loaded with molasses candy and scattered it around among Southern Baptists. Dr. Bright did not do it. We asked "Langley [the Virginia correspondent of Dr. Bright's paper] if Dr. Bright gave him any molasses candy and he smacked his lips significantly and said that he did not. If Dr. Bright did not give Langley any then he did not have any. That is perfectly clear to any rational mind. So the theory of Dr. Bright having had molasses candy concealed about his person tumbles to the ground.

"But another point. When Dr. L———— charges that Dr. Bright fed Southern Baptists on taffy that is equal to saying that we poor Southern simpletons unsuspectingly swallowed the saccharine dose. Does he mean that Southern Baptists are fond of flattery, or else that we have not sense to know when a man is flattering us. Come, now, this matter is growing

Digitized by Google

serious. Dr. L———— swings a two edged sword which, while aimed at Dr. Bright, pierces us. Before he knows it he will hurt somebody.

"We beg Dr. L———— not to be rough on Dr. Bright. He may not be successful in running so good a paper as the J———— and M————, but he is a christian brother, and we must be kind to him. Taffy may not be a first class luxury but it is sweeter than vinegar."

Upon his return from the Convention he celebrated his ninth pastoral anniversary and Rev. G. F. Williams thus describes the manner in which he spent the day:

"Dr. Hatcher preached his anniversary sermon in the morning and received floral and other tributes of the affection and good wishes of his people. After dinner he visited among them till three o'clock; he then attended the annual meeting of his church, to be gratified by the showing of remarkable progress in most departments of their church work. At five o'clock he conducted a funeral service. At eight o'clock he preached for the Fulton Baptist Church on the opposite side of the city from his home; at ten o'clock he reached his home and did important writing for two hours before retiring.

"Dr. Hatcher has grown a trifle grey and this is not to be wondered at if his Sundays generally are as busy as his anniversary day."

His craving for the refreshment of country air and country people shows itself in the following:

"It was just six o'clock on Friday afternoon of last week that we rapped at the door of our saintly and excellent sister, Mrs. Sarah Sydnor of Hanover County. We drove out on the purely selfish errand of basking beneath the shade of her kingly oaks, breathing the pure air, escaping the remorseless heats of the city and having a quiet evening in her lovely home.

"Oh, what a bright eyed and gladsome welcome she gave us. How rich and ready was her hospitality. To her and that matchless domestic philosopher, Miss Francis, we make our most grateful obeisance."

Here is a vivid little picture of one of the multitudinous experiences that befell him as he went to and fro over the country:

Digitized by Google

"On our way to the Potomac Association" he writes: "we stepped from the New York train at eleven and a half o'clock at night and there stood beneath the gas light the towering form of O. F. Flippo, Jr. He had come out at that drowsy hour to take charge of this begrimed pilgrim. Upon reaching the parsonage, we found the old gentleman—that is, the senior Oscar—with his head out at the second story window shouting with charming vociferousness, 'Come in brother; come in and up. Glad, glad to see you.'

"What was yet more amazing, he escorted us to the supper room and forced us to partake of a rich mid-night festival. Flippo's house is a happy retreat for a hungry man—but not so attractive a place for a sleepy man—for who can sleep when he has Flippo at his best to talk to him. We had a pleasant visit, but, even at the risk of losing Flippo's favor, we boldly declare that we did not have as happy a visit as we might have had and would have had if Mrs. Flippo had been at home. Her praise, as a pastor's wife, is on many lips and it was a sore regret that we did not see her."

After preaching in New York he attended the Albemarle Association in Amherst County and in a complimentary letter in the Herald about the Amherst people he referred to them as "stalwart mountaineers". They resented the name "mountaineer," as applied to themselves, and Dr. Hatcher, upon hearing of it, replied in the Herald:

"A brother told us that some of the Amherst people were offended with us because we spoke of them as "mountaineers." Instead of begging their pardon we will make one remark. We have never had much to boast of in connection with our own history; not noble ancestry, nor wealth, nor genius, nor fame, but one thing we have ever loved to boast of and that is that we were born in the mountains of Virginia. We count it an honor that we are a mountaineer and never weary of upbraiding our friends who were so unaccountably foolish as to be born in the flat lowlands of Virginia. As a fact we esteem our visit to Amherst as among the most charming incidents of our Summer campaign and we would indeed be a monster of ingratitude if we had written one word to wound those who treated us with such delightful consideration."

From point to point in the state he dashed but there was

Digitized by Google

one little visit, only a few moments in length, that stood out in a class by itself. It was a stop that he made at the mountain stream in Bedford in which, as a boy, he was baptized.

"At eight o'clock that morning" he wrote "in company with brother M. C. Judd, we left Liberty in an open carriage and as we sped along the old familiar road our memory was busy with the events of other days and our eyes were feasting upon the ever shifting scene of beauty that spread before us, The day was faultlessly bright and refreshing and the hills of old Bedford were never decked in fairer robes of loveliness than on that morning. As we crossed Otter Creek—within a few steps of the spot where in our boyhood we were buried in baptism with our Redeemer—we could not resist the impulse to alight from the carriage and dip our brow once more in its clear and placid current. Ah, that happy baptismal day. Can we ever forget it."

Thus his Summer days passed by and September found him again in Richmond. The scattered family came trooping back, the children were equipped for school and '608 W. Grace' was open once more for business.

His Summer rambles always strengthened the tie between the country people and his own church in Richmond, and his sermons and addresses during the Summer generally resulted in requests to him for return visits in the Fall or Winter months.

He wrote every week in the Herald one or two columns of paragraphs under the heading, "Along the Baptist Lines." These paragraphs told of Baptist happenings in the state. While he aimed to make his news items interesting for all readers yet he gave the preference to those items that would cheer, or stimulate, the workers "along the Baptist lines." He delighted to single out pastors who were toiling in lonely places, or were tugging at difficult tasks with but little reward, and bring them into his columns with words of love and praise, His comments never dropped into flattery, nor fulsome praise, and he sought to pay tributes only to those who merited them.

But here and there a reader would become disgruntled. A gentleman wrote him a letter which ran substantially as follows:

Digitized by Google

"DEAR DR. HATCHER:

"You fill your columns with too much praise of preachers. You give us only one side of the situation. You overdo the matter and ought not to praise so many people."

Dr. Hatcher accepted the challenge and announced in the Herald of Oct. 30th that he would discontinue his praise of the brethren and would in the future seek to gather gloomy items for his columns. He told of the critical letter which he had received, asked the public to send him only dark and doleful tidings. How did the experiment work?

He answered this question in the Herald of Nov. 6th:

"After duly nerving our mind up to the shot-gun policy and getting on the war paint we sat down to report all the crashes collisions and explosions up and down the Baptist lines. But, as we dipped our pen in fire and began our deadly business, trouble set in upon us like a tornado from every quarter. We could not make any headway. Everybody seemed to turn against us. Our bloodiest items perished on our hands.

"First of all, we made a savage drive at Dr. Pollard, beginning our item thus:

"'A perverse world will gloat in demonical rapture to hear that the pastor of Leigh Street church [Dr. Pollard] is in very bad health and happily growing worse every day'—when in walked Pollard with the glow of health upon his face. So that paragraph faded out.

"Then we fancied that we had mortal aim upon another of the Richmond pastors and were shaping our thoughts thus; 'We hasten with savage joy to record the fact that brother so and so made a total and unmitigated break-down in his last Sunday night's sermon and is now on the jagged borders of despair; when in came a brother who had heard the sermon and declared that it was truly a masterly sermon. Away went another item.

"Next, we thought we had a safe case on brother J. M. Pilcher of Petersburg which was to go thus; 'We are pleased to say that brother J. M. Pilcher is suffering with a wounded thumb, which is steadily growing worse and worse, much to the satisfaction of a gainsaying world' when in strode the identical Pilcher, serenely announcing that his finger was on the highway to recovery. Thereupon item No.3 vanished. Despairing of finding such news as we had promised in Richmond, we turned

Digitized by Google

to our mountainous pile of correspondence but it gave us no consolation. Not a paragraph of the sulphurous sort could we pick up. One man was jubilantly reporting a great revival in his church, another was telling of the conversion of his son. In short we had not a dot of bad news and we did have budgets of juicy and cheery items. What could we do? We had no means for starting an establishment for the manufacture of dreadful tidings. We could only publish such things as were sent us. Such being the state of the case, we are constrained to withdraw the promise of last week and do as we have always done."

One day he and Dr. ———, a prominent minister of the Disciples denomination were in a store together and Dr. ——— called out saying:

"Dr. Hatcher, give me a good text for next Sunday. I have been so busy that I have not had time to find a one."

"I have a text that would be particularly suitable for you" replied Dr. Hatcher. 'Here it is:—'Ye blind guides which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.' "

"That's a very good text" said Dr. ——— "but why do you say it is specially a good text for me?"

"Because you have swallowed "A Campbell" replied Dr. Hatcher, with a good natured smile.

It was his custom every Christmas day to visit the aged and the poor of his congregation.

He was walking along the street in Richmond one day when a merchant—a gentleman with whom he maintained very friendly relations and often indulged in bantering pleasantries—drove up to the curb stone in his buggy and called out: "Doctor, jump in and I'll give you a ride the rest of the way," to which Doctor Hatcher replied as he continued his steps, scarcely looking up:

"No, I thank you; I'm in a hurry."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX

FRIENDSHIP. D. L. MOODY. VISITS TO THE COUNTRY. CHARLES H. PRATT. AIDING STUDENTS

1884-1885

One of the dominant traits of his life was his passion for friendship. It was not merely his love that he had for men as his brothers, but there was a select circle to whom the doors of his heart were flung wide open and all that he had was theirs. "In every soul" he wrote "there is an inner court—the temple where selfhood unveils itself and invites the entrance of friendship. There faith knows no doubt, love casts out fear and soul holds fellowship with soul." He had no patience with the motto "treat a friend as if he might become your enemy" His career cannot be understood without appreciating what a large factor in his life were his friendships. It was in that sacred realm that his soul was seen at its best and its worst; there, the true William E. Hatcher stood forth as nowhere else and his friends looked him through and through and saw him as he was. There be some, in this day, who discount friendship, and the public press recently has dropped suggestions about modern conditions making impossible the friendships of older days. Let us not lose our friendships. "True friendship between man and man" said a wise writer "is infinite and immortal" and truly has it been styled "the sweetener of life."

He had certain friends to whom he became linked in his early ministry and to them he clung with undying devotion to the end. Among these were Charles H. Ryland, John R. Bagby, H. H. Wyer, A. E. Owen and others. He had later

Digitized by Google

friendships with Henry McDonald, W. W. Landrum, T. H. Pritchard, Robert H. Winfree—but it is vain to attempt to call the roll.

To tear such friendships, as he had with these men and others, out of his life would have been to mangle his entire ministry. He carried them in his heart, lived upon their love, entwined much of his life around them and drew rich inspiration from their fellowship. His soul was built for friendship; it had to have it and would have died without it.

When he heard that his friend John R. Bagby had been wounded in the army he set forth to find him and after untold difficulties in locating and reaching him he found him so weak and helpless that he not only had to shuffle him aboard jolting cars and uncomfortable conveyances but he had to carry him on his back for a considerable distance, before he could get him to his own home where for many weeks he nursed him back through the different stages of his recovery.

One of his richest friendships was that with Dr. Henry McDonald. He tells how this friendship began at the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond in 1876. He heard Dr. McDonald make a speech and he says regarding it:

"Candidly speaking, it was not his form, features, argument, eloquence,—nothing audible, nor visible, that attracted me. The joy of the hour to me was the discovery of a man. Back of all else was a personality, so simple, so stately, so tender and so winsome, that I surrendered on the spot. He touched certain chords of my being that had never been swept before. New fountains of joy opened in my soul. Without introduction, or apology, he entered into my life, into the inner court of my being without knocking at the door, without sending in his card. He was in before I knew it and strangely enough, a room all furnished and ready, awaited his coming.

I knew him instantly, about as well as I ever knew him afterwards."

Side by side they labored as pastors in Richmond for several years until Dr. McDonald moved to Atlanta. "His departure

Digitized by Google

from Richmond" said Dr. Hatcher "was like a burial to me. It did not break our bonds, but it separated us and the isolation which he left behind was an oppression. . . Separation made no difference. We met in after times, just as we parted, and began just where we left off. Our wrangles were incessant and while they rattled, they never strained, our bonds." It was just about this time that he and Dr. McDonald met one day in the Summer at the Baptist headquarters in New York. He thus draws the picture:

"While chatting with these brethren, in came that ever beloved friend of my heart, Dr. Henry McDonald. I did not salute him with a kiss, though I have seen two cases of masculine kissing during my visit; but I attested my affection for McDonald by a spontaneous and warmly reciprocated embrace. We had nearly six hours together—hours of untold comfort and strength to me. We loitered along the streets rode the cars, crossed the ferries, pretended to see the sights, but to me the sight of McDonald's face was a vision of beauty that made New York stale and insipid."

At a later time he tells of another little reunion with this same friend:

"We were sitting in our study, last Friday in a rather sombre frame of mind; the past looked unsatisfactory and even the future took on a cerulean tint. We were on the murky edge of melancholy and felt that life consisted of blasted hopes and a few gray hairs. There then was a rap at the door and in sprang our beloved McDonald of Georgia. He had been holding a meeting at Wake Forest College and had with his excellent geographic accuracy, decided that the shortest route from North Carolina to Georgia was by the way of Richmond. He was in magnificent health, cherry and radiant, full of hope and a panacea for all our sorrows. He reported the conversion of twenty Wake Forest students, chatted brightly for half an hour about the good things of the kingdom, and then departed, but the charm of his spirit abode with us and we were on the mountain top for the rest of the day."

Many of his friendships, like that with Dr. McDonald,

Digitized by Google

seemed to open upon him suddenly. "Procure not friends in haste and, when thou hast a friend, part not with him in haste" says Solon the lawgiver; a wise rule, without doubt, for him who sets forth to find a friend. But in Dr. Hatcher's case his choicest friendships seemed to find him and broke upon him as a revelation. "The moment of finding a fellow creature" says George Eliot is often as full of mingled doubt and exultation as the moment of finding an idea." In his moment of finding his friends, however, there was the exultation without the doubt. He raised no interrogation points over his friendships. He cared not for the counsel, "before you make a friend eat a bushel of salt with him." Verily let many bushels of salt be eaten first, if the friendship is to be of the man's making. But he seemed to wait for his friendships to begin. It is true that he did not force his friendships, nor did he overwork them. He gave them ample margin to operate naturally and spontaneously. He speaks, somewhere, about youthful friendships meeting an untimely death by high pressure and over indulgence. But such cautious treatment of his friendships implies reverence rather than suspicion, or distrust.

His friendships, however, suffered some tragedies,—not merely in painful separations, but, sometimes, in estrangements and treachery. For example, he writes me, at this time, about a man who, in his early ministry, was one of his dearest friends—a layman whom he had helped, in many ways, to make a man of himself. After many years the old friend had broken the tie and drifted out of his reach, although he still was living in Richmond. The man's son had just gone to wreck in financial matters in the business world and in writing me about it he says:

"It cut me to the quick. Ah, I think how his father did and I can hardly wonder that ———— went crooked. His father was my bosom friend and he forsook me and that for reasons I could never make out. I love him yet, but I do not know the road back to his heart."

He had another friend—a splendid christian woman of Richmond—but in a certain stressful period she, by her heated

Digitized by Google

words, greatly strained the friendly tie and he, in kindly words warned her to be careful, saying "Friendship is a delicate treasure and if you deal with it too roughly it may break." "Friendship" says Landor "is a vase which, when it is flawed by heat, or violence, or accident, may as well be broken at once; it can never be trusted afterwards." "False men never have friends" said Dr. Hatcher "but true men cannot live without them. Our Lord needed company in the solitude of the garden and in the raptures of the mountain vision."

He received a Christmas token from his choice friend, Rev. H. H. Wyer. Whenever he would start on a journey into any part of northern Virginia he would begin to think of "Wyer" and begin to wonder if he could not put Warrenton on his schedule and thus get a sight of him. He pays him a tribute in the Herald:

"When from his sick room at Warrenton Va. H. H. Wyer sent us a christmas token of remembrance he little knew how it would touch our heart into freshness, life and love. Ah, these old friends—friends of the morning hours of life—friends tested by changing years and blinding sorrows—friends whose circles are ever narrowing and coming closer and closer together—friends with the deepening snows on their beard—how we love them. Oh, how we love them! There is music in their names, pathos in their voices and an ever growing charm in their presence. Dear, sick, Wyer, we are with you in spirit, day by day and night by night. That is right, old fellow; pull up and hold on. Earth with you gone from it could never be so bright again."

"His love for his friends" said Dr. C. H. Herndon "was, while changeless and steadfast as the stars, as ardent and intense as a school boy's."

As this narrative of his life advances it will unfold his happy experiences with these men whom he loved above all others.

"I have an invitation" he writes me "to go to California in August to hold a meeting, with all my expenses paid. It comes from Frank Dixon at Oakland. I am thinking of accepting. Dr. C. E. Taylor promises to go with me. Must I go?

Digitized by Google

(It seems to me that I wrote you this before—or if not to you, to some other nice and confidential friend.)"

The year 1885 opened with a bright event for him,—the arrival of the great preacher, D. L. Moody, for evangelistic meetings in Richmond. He hailed his coming with delight and threw himself into the campaign with enthusiasm. A touching incident occured at the opening service, which he loved to tell. The newspapers had reported, before Mr. Moody's arrival in Richmond, that he had in former years spoken very harsh words about the South. He heard of it and wrote to the committee, of which Dr. Hatcher was a member, suggesting that his visit to Richmond be abandoned, but the committee would not hear of it.

He came, but at this first Sunday morning service, he felt a chill in the air. "He was evidently embarrassed" said Dr. Hatcher "and spoke with constraint and uneasiness. Just as the service was about to close he descended from his elevated stand and walked to the front of the choir platform and made a speech. 'Friends of Richmond' he said, 'you have been reading about me lately and I fear you have not a good feeling for me. I do not think I said the things against the South with which I am charged; but I am an awful fool and have said many foolish things in my day. If I ever did say anything against the South I am sorry for it and ask you to forgive me.'

"Instantly a ripple of applause commenced and swelled into a thundering roar. Moody bowed his head, tears were in his eyes and he had the heart of Richmond."

Moody was his joy and the meetings claimed him day and night.

He tells of an experience he had with Mr. Moody in connection with the "Inquiry Room". Boarding at the same hotel with Mr. Moody was a man of an unsavory reputation and yet he "carried loads of sanctity about him and fastened on to the great evangelist with unscrupulous eagerness." One afternoon, in the inquirer's meeting, Mr. Moody suggested this individual as being well suited to take down the names of the inquirers

Digitized by Google

who had come into the room for counsel and help. Dr. Hatcher knew in a flash that such selection would be a mistake.

"I ventured to suggest to Mr. Moody" he said "that he would leave that to be settled later on and with his characteristic snap he said the thing ought to be done at once. I suggested that it ought to be put into the hands of a committee, but he declared, brusquely enough, that there was no use for all that machinery. I nominated another man and then he turned on me and asked what was the matter with me any way and broke into a laugh. When the meeting was over he said 'I want to thank you for what you did.' But I told him that I felt that I owed him an apology and was afraid that he would be offended. He put his mouth to my ear and said 'What is the matter with him?' I told him that it was not worth telling but that of all the men in Richmond he was the most unsuited to be secretary of the inquiry room. Then, with a charming candor, he said that with the great pressure which was upon him, he was exceedingly liable to make mistakes and said to me that he hoped I would watch him and help him so far as I could.

"I know I have not told this matter in such a way that it can be appreciated. His honesty was so luminous, so candid, so modest, so thorough that it subdues me to tears. It showed me that he had no use for himself, no sensitiveness about himself, no feeling about himself except to do the thing that ought to be done in the way that would do the most good."

Dr. Hatcher was requested to make a farewell address to Mr. Moody at the end of the meetings, assuring him of the love and gratitude of the Richmond people. During the last service he told Mr. Moody of the task that had been laid upon him.

"Please don't do it" said Mr. Moody "I appreciate it all, but it makes me feel like a fool when folks get to hurrahing over me."

"My speech" said Dr. Hatcher "did not come to pass."

It was a varied procession of characters that tramped their way to his study door. He draws a picture of one of them:

Digitized by Google

"We can stand a book agent provided he is of the masculine denomination. We are not afraid of him. He is a man and so are we in a small way and we have our rights. . . . .

"But when she comes—then is the winter of our discontent. We bow to the storm and have no remarks to submit. She is a woman and has the advantage of us. She has seen better days and has a tear in her eye. She belongs to an old family and swam in luxury in her youth.

"She came the other day. How glib and rattling she was! She had us before we knew it. She had us sitting as erect as a sunbeam in July and meekly nodding assent to her sage observations. We neither moved hand, nor foot, and, as for talking, we had no chance. She talked fast and she talked long and she talked all the time. After regaling us with the grandeur of her ancestry, the pleasures of her childhood and the surpassing excellences of her book she touched us up; she did it handsomely; she expatiated on the potency of our influence, the value of our personal signature and the well known warmth and kindness of our heart. Greatness, she hinted, always had a tear on its cheek for the struggling and unfortunate and there we were —a dumb and foolish victim to the spell. Time came and went, but she went on and on and on. We felt fatigued and lonesome and wondered how it would end. Finally she descended from her circumlocutory flight and lit in the region of business. The atmosphere became commercial and it was a question of dollars and cents. She had a book for sale and desired to sell us a copy. It ceased to be a question of ancestry and the poetry and praise all faded away. The spell was broken and all we had to do was to say whether or not we would buy the book.

"We did it as well as we could—we spoke in a bright and respectful tone—we even thanked her for her visit—we paid a tribute to her brilliant conversational gifts—we wished her high fortune and a golden future and we expressed regret that it had to be so. How her whole aspect changed. She patted her foot with petulance, her face flushed, she breathed wildly and swept angrily away.

"And yet, truly, we felt sorry for her. It hurt us to think of her hard lot and her desperate devices to stem the tide of adverse fortune. We would have bought her book except that we could not conscientiously pay an exorbitant price for a useless article."

Digitized by Google

A ministerial student from the College was in his study one day and Dr. Hatcher was talking about a certain city pastor in the state. He seemed worried by the brother's peculiarities and he suddenly and impatiently exclaimed regarding the minister and yet with a suggestion of humor:

"Psychologically, he's a monstrosity; theologically, he's a heretic and practically he's an anarchist."

It was rare that a week passed without finding him traveling into some section of the state for a lecture, a dedication, a revival campaign, or a service of some kind. He went, the latter part of March, into the mountains of Augusta county to take part in a dedication and an ordination service at the Greenville church. He draws a vivid picture of his arrival at the Peyton home and of the greeting which he received from old Mr. Peyton:

"There he was, stretched on his lounge—I mean brother Wm. H. Peyton—a victim of some grievous foot trouble; and, as I out-ran all the rest and rushed—unannounced upon him in his chamber he sprang up and took me to his arms. I could not help it—the tears would, in spite of me, roll out; but I played the hypocrite and hid them from him. Oh, the precious old brother! For just twenty five years I had carried him in my heart; but I never loved him before so much as I did that night. Four nights I rested beneath his roof. Sweet restful nights, without a care or pain—petted and pampered, chided and upbraided by Mother Linda. We talked of the past; we read the word of Christ together; we sang the hymns, the old and new, we knelt at the same altar where, in the far off ante bellum, we used to bow; we asked our father to spare us for other meetings on the earth and communed wonderingly about that other meeting out on the green hills far away beyond this scene of strife and death."

As was his custom on such trips he carried a boy with him.

"In my pilgrimage" says he "I had as my fellow traveler, Master John Garland Pollard, son of Dr. John Pollard, pastor of the Leigh Street Church. When we started he was frail and nervous and carried his box of quinine with him but the sight

Digitized by Google

of the mountains, the racking rides over the hills, the rich milk and the pure crisp air, put the rose tints on his young cheek. When, on Wednesday morning, we bowed adieu to the Greenville folks and the train whistled away with us, the eyes of the Richmond boy grew very moist and he said with a rueful face: 'Oh, I am so sorry to have to leave' and that was the way I felt."

The boy of that trip is the present Attorney General of the State.

His rural journeys brought him some ludicrous, as well as sentimental, episodes. For example, a few weeks after the Greenville visit, he went out into the country to preach and was delightfully entertained at supper in one of the homes of the community,—the ladies of the home making themselves particularly agreeable, vieing with each other in ministering to his comfort. After supper he hurried to the church, ahead of the others and began the service. Shortly afterwards the family arrived and found seats, but he observed them not.

"After the service" wrote Dr. Hatcher "we undertook to play the agreeable and began to shake hands with the saints and to chat around to the best of our ability. Presently we found a strikingly good looking sister in front of us and holding out our hand we expressed a wish to form her acquintance. A vicious titter rattled through the crowd and the sister looked a little scornful. We asked what it all meant and found to our undoing that the lady in question was the one 'who gave us our supper'. We spent a good part of the night in trying to explain how it happened, but we cannot say that our transgression will ever be forgiven."

The New York Sun, a few days later, copied the above narrative and Dr. Hatcher thus remarked:

"The editor [of the New York Sun] seems to think it was very funny. Perhaps it was, but it did not seem so to us, nor the sister."

His many rambles through the state, did not bring him universal fame;—as is seen from an incident which occured at this time:

Digitized by Google

"We have knocked around in the country adjacent to Richmond very extensively. There is not a road which we have not traveled again and again and not a church which we have not visited and not a neighborhood into which we have not gone. In our conceit, we had concluded that we were one of the well known brethren,—at least within a small compass.

"Imagine how our plumes dropped to the dust the other evening when, upon being introduced to a quite pleasant looking old Baptist lady, she curiously eyed us from head to foot and innocently inquired if we were a 'station preacher in Richmond'; and there sat Thornhill, a gleeful winess of our downfall and what could we say. A blank sense of our obscurity struck us dumb."

He maintained very pleasant relations with his Methodist brethren and often engaged in pleasant banter with them. He was in a group of persons on one occasion in which there were one or two persons by the name of Hatcher who were Methodists.

One of the Methodist Hatchers called out to him: "Dr. Hatcher how did you and the other Hatchers who are Baptists happen to stray off?"

"Stray off?" said Dr. Hatcher "You'd better ask how you strayed off. There were Hatchers in this county before John Wesley was born."

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College, one of the gentlemen present arose and said:

"Brother moderator, I move that when this Board awards the degree of "D. D." to a minister and that minister does not think enough of the College to come to the Commencement to receive the degree, that the action of the Board be declared null and void."

"But brother Moderator," said Judge H———— 'Suppose this Board awards the "D. D." degree to a minister and that minister starts to the College Commencement to receive the degree and he takes the train in time to attend the commencement, but the train happens to be delayed and he hurries on, however, as rapidly as he can, jumps on the trolley after reaching the Richmond depot and the trolley jumps off and causes another delay and after several such delays the man reaches the College grounds, rushes into the building, but, alas, misses the Com-

Digitized by Google

mencement exercises; where is that fellow?' Has he got the two "D's" or one "D" or what is he?"

"I think" spoke up Dr. Hatcher "that he is two "D's" with a dash between."

One of the bright features of his Sunday services was the presence of visitors from other sections of the country. One Sunday morning during the Spring he noticed in his congregation an elderly, plain, but interesting looking gentleman. After the service had ended he greeted the visitor who gave his name as Mr. Pratt. Of course he fell a victim to Dr. Hatcher's hospitable clutches and had to go home with him to dinner. Well do I remember the sensation created among us children that day when in some way we learned that the old gentleman—who I first took to be a successful farmer from one of the Virginia counties—was worth several millions of dollars. What a stretching of eyes in the direction of the multi-millionaire and a shower of winks at each other we endulged in around the table. We gazed at the visitor, as if the seven wonders of the world had suddenly been transported to 608 W. Grace Street and had taken up their abode in the quiet looking old man at our side.

Even we youngsters, however, could see that he had wonderful eyes and when he talked along in his simple way he spoke as if he had tons of other things back in his head that he might say if he wanted to.

But dinner is over and of course Dr. Hatcher must have his distinguished visitor see his Boys Meeting. He was none other than Mr. Charles Pratt, the founder of the Pratt Institute and the well-known Baptist philanthropist of Brooklyn and New York. Dr. Hatcher probably informed him that his visit to Richmond would be a failure if he did not see the Boys Meeting and so, in a few minutes, they put out for the church.

The sight of such a large number of laughing, bright-eyed boys seemed to stir the old man. The singing,—it almost threatened to lift him off his feet and the other exercises interested him immensely. The boys had to have a speech from

Digitized by Google

their visitor; they generally charged that as the price of admission:—though they saw to it that he was not neglected when the collection was taken up. He consented to speak and what golden words of practical wisdom he gave us in a quiet, unpretentious talk.

"Well boys" he began "I was called on to speak to you very unexpectedly and know not what to say to you. I asked your pastor to give me a subject and he playfully suggested that I tell you how to make money. But no, no; that is too mean a thing to talk about on Sunday. And yet money is a good thing and it is well to study the art of making and using money.

"A gentleman asked me the other day how much I was worth. I replied that I was rich,—rich beyond the power of computation. I told him that I had a happy home with a loving wife and eight children—six of them boys—and that these were my jewels."

Then he talked along for perhaps ten of fifteen minutes and the boys gave him great attention. It was an interesting day and an acquaintance was begun that was very delightfully continued.

Soon after his return to Richmond from the Southern Baptist Convention he severed his connection with the Religious Herald. This editorial task, was heavy and, with his pastoral and other activities, was well nigh crushing. It was not the day of stenographers and typewriters—at least in any large sense—and the two or three columns each week were the labor of his own pen,—except when he dictated to his wife or children at home.

"I have frequently remarked to our friends that you looked tired and worn and I was afraid that the burden laid upon you was greater than you could bear" writes a gentleman referring to his many duties. He did at times look "tired and worn" but such was not his normal appearance.

In his Tenth Anniversary sermon, in May, he speaks of his pastorate of the church as having been "the heaviest care of my life."

Digitized by Google

"Many times" said he "I have staggered beneath the load and, in my moments of depression and embarrassment, I have felt as if I sighed for release. But the hand of God has held me. I have not staid for bread, nor honor nor necessity. Other and richer and easier fields have sought me and my life was bound up with this church. There have been times when I began to think I must go, but Providence has fixed it otherwise."

He might have added that at that time there were those in the church that were adding much to the heaviness of his load, but he thus continued:

"I think I can truly say that my heart knows nothing but kindness and good will for all the members of this church. I love all and hate none. I would help all and hurt none."

He took upon himself the financial support of four ministerial students–in addition to those whom he was already helping. These four young men—not Virginians—had come to the College expecting to receive aid from the Education Board. "We cannot help you with our funds if you are not from Virginia" said the Board to them. "We are not permitted to do so." It was a dark day for the young men, but Dr. Hatcher came to their rescue. "They seemed to be so bitterly disappointed" he said "and, withal, were so bright and promising, that we could not bear the thought of sending them away and then what? Well, this overtaxed scribe assumed the burden of these young men's support at the College, trusting that somewhere in the great outside world there would rise up generous friends to help me."

This was in the Fall of 1884. Next Summer we find him still carrying the burden of these "four preachers boys."and seeking to secure aid for them for the next session. The Herald correspondent draws a picture of him as he was pleading for them at an Association.

"The last thing we saw in the church was Dr. Hatcher taking a collection for "his boys" (supplemental to the one he had taken in the yard during recess) from two brethren not expecting

Digitized by Google

to be present next day and the last we heard at the depot, as the cars were rolling up, was a call from Dr. Hatcher (sitting in the carriage that was conveying him to his home) for a collection from that crowd on the platform for "my boys".

He had a gift for quieting storms that would arise in Associational meetings. Sometimes the discussions would become tangled, or even a little sharp, and he seemed always to have his oil can ready for the restless waves.

It was not often that he attended an association that he did not take up a collection to aid some struggling interest. For example, during the Summer, he raised $1000 for the Mountain Plain church at the close of revival meetings, and at the Shenandoah Association, "Dr. Hatcher engineered a collection for Winchester and raised $295.50."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XX

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE. CULPEPER MEETINGS. WEEKLY LETTERS. YOUNG MEN IN HIS HOME. LECTURE TRIPS. THE FRIEND OF COUNTRY CHURCHES

1885-1886

His editorial pen was growing restless and consequently, when at this time he received an invitation to be contributing editor of the Baltimore Baptist—the Baptist state paper of Maryland—he sent them his acceptance and, in a short while, he found himself addressing, each week, a wide circle of Virginia readers.

Among the congratulations that came to the paper for having secured Dr. Hatcher as correspondent was one from Rev. George Vanderlip, closing with the words

> "One blast upon his bugle horn
> Were worth a thousand men."

Dr. Bailey, of the "Biblical Recorder," pronounced him "the most gifted and popular editor in the South." Every week the mail had to carry his editorial paragraphs for the Baltimore Baptist. He generally composed these writings at his home. The Baltimore train passed by our house and many were the evenings that I heard him call "Eldridge, take this letter for the Baltimore Baptist" and that meant that I must keep on the lookout for the northern train which would stop at the Elba up-town station at our back gate. We could easily hear the engine bell as the train crept up Belvidere Street, and I could wait until it reached Grace Street and then

Digitized by Google

hurry through the rear gate and be in time to hand in the letter at the mail car. He was whipped to and fro by so many duties and suffered so many interruptions, that he sometimes found himself near the last day for sending his weekly matter for the paper with the matter still unwritten, and on such occasions he would hurry home and, with my mother, or some one, as his amanuensis, he would drive ahead for an hour or two "before the train comes" and frequently he would add the final words and seal the letter, with the engine bell over on Franklin Street announcing its approach, and with his words "there's the train; hurry now my lad."

I rarely in these later days see the long northern train pulling its winding way across Grace Street towards Elba that I do not think of the father at his desk, by the window, hurrying his pen "along the Baptist lines" and the boy hastening through the back gate and banging on the door of the mail car in order that the important letter might be in the first mail, next morning, in Baltimore. He wrote during these years frequently and, for awhile, regularly for the New York Examiner and many of the runs for the mail car were in the interest of the New York periodical.

"Dr. W. E. Hatcher will begin revival meetings next Sunday at the First Baptist Church" was the announcement that traveled the streets of Culpeper about the middle of November.

The day arrived and Dr. Hatcher was at his post and the campaign began. His preaching during the first week of the meetings seemed to produce no effect. The people listened respectfully and then went home. "The anxiety was oppressive" he said. He prayed and preached and worked but the campaign seemed destined to meet disaster.

"At length" wrote he "the cloud broke. For several days the men stood in serried ranks and apparently immoveable. They packed the galleries almost to suffocation. There they sat, or stood, solemn, silent and unshaken. But Monday night their ranks began to waver and several of their leaders came over the line. From that time the work was easy. Night after

Digitized by Google

night, men and boys poured down out of the gallery and pushed their way up to the pulpit to make their confession of Christ, Oh, it was glorious. It has been the most powerful and yet most quiet work of grace that I have ever witnessed. . . .

"The town is ringing with hallelujahs. It was a new sight for Culpeper for whiskey barrels to be rolling out of the bar rooms with their contents emptying into the gutters and yet that was one of the results of the wonderful meetings just closed."

"Culpeper has never before felt nor witnessed such a deep and all pervasive religious awakening as this" wrote the pastor, Dr. C. F. James, in the Religious Herald "The news has spread throughout the region round about and the brethren are coming up to Culpeper as the tribes went up to Jerusalem. I cannot begin to describe the meeting. It is the most remarkable work of grace that I ever saw. Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Such experiences put Dr. Hatcher on the mountain top. He returned to his church with the echoes of the revival singing in his heart and his own people felt the thrill of the meetings as he told to them the story.

In the early months of 1886 he and his wife wrote the Life of Dr. A. B. Brown,—his wife contributing much the larger portion of the work. She had been a pupil of Dr. Brown, who in his last years had been the brilliant professor of English in Richmond College and also one of Dr. Hatcher's most valuable members in the Grace Street Church. He wrote the chapter in the "Brown" book on "The Country Pastor".

He was elected president of the Baptist Congress which met, in the first part of March, at Danville, Va.

One of his most highly prized friends was Dr. J. L. M. Curry, at that time United States Embassador to Spain,—who, he said, "had a head that would adorn any crown on earth."

"United States Legation,
"Madrid, Spain, 7 March, 1886.

"Dear Bro. Hatcher:

"The last Herald I received said that illness kept you from the Pastors Conference. I know what a privation that must have been to you and a greater one to them. I fear you have

Digitized by Google

been overtaxing your powers, or that the excessive labors of last and former years are beginning to tell on you. I warned you before I left and I send my protest again over the waters. You and Harris do too much and your lives are too valuable to be wasted. . . . .

"If old Grace Street Church would liberate you for six months with a full purse and send you along with Landrum, I might meet you in France and be your guide and companion for a few days.

"I miss very much, too, those friendly confidential talks we used to have and would rather take with you and Charlie [C. H.] Ryland another jaunt to "brother Davy's" than to see Alhambra, or the vatican. It may cheer you, if you are still sick, for me to say you have done me much, very much good in my life and I think of you with grateful affection, with deep earnest love. I picked up my pen just to say that and having said it I close.

"Mrs. Curry begs to send loving remembrance to you and Mrs. Hatcher. I join, of course most heartily and include the children. "Affectionately

"J. L. M. Curry."

The visit of Rev. Dr. F. M. Ellis of Baltimore to his home and his church at this time was to him a happy event and opened the door to a friendship that bound them together for the rest of their days. On Saturday, during the visit, he took Dr. Ellis in company with Drs. L——— and P—— down the river on a fishing excursion. Dr. Hatcher on a fishing frolic presented an incongruity. He was a lover of certain games but the sporting element, so rampant in his brother Havery, seemed to have been entirely left out of him. Walton declares that good fisherman are like poets, born not made. In Dr. Hatcher's case neither nature nor art inclined him towards angling and it is a proof of his love of good fellowship that he became a member of the fishing party. "It was an off day with the fish" he said "and P——— was the only man who interfered with the domestic quiet of the minnows. He claimed to be the hero of the occasion and that honor was voted to him with the understanding that the occasion was a failure."

Digitized by Google

It was a motley throng that crossed his daily path,—as is seen from the following two incidents:

"When a broad breasted, muscular, red-faced man, with a soiled collar and a breath befouled with whiskey, comes into our study and tells us how much his mother loves us and how popular we are in his section of the country and how everybody is dying to see us and how much he always likes to hear us preach and how successful he had been in business and then closes his discourse with a pathetic request that we will lend him two dollars we grow a trifle crabbed and begin to think that, after all, there may be more in the Darwinian theory than a great many people think. At the same time we do not lend him the two dollars. That is fixed. We believe in helping the poor and consider lending money a christian virtue but the man who gets our two dollars must at least have the right kind of breath."

"He stormed like a volcano and his wrath was at white heat. He fell upon us and told us with vigorous indignation how bad he thought we were. We enjoyed it. We always respect an honestly mad man. His wrath is a token of his sincerity. There was something so charming in his realness and candor that we almost forgot that we were the target at which the blows were directed. When he finished we simply explained to him how it all happened, the storm cloud broke and the genial sunlight was on his brow again.

"If we must get angry let us do it hotly and courageously. Let us blaze like a furnace and go for the object of our anger at once. In this way we may finish up the business in a single day and the setting day sun will not see the war cloud on our brow."

He wired his beloved friend, Dr. H. H. Wyer, that Richmond College had confered upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Dr. Wyer's reply was as follows:

"I received the telegram with your name signed to it congratulating me on the honor recently conferred on me by Richmond College. There was a storm coming up at the time the boy handed me on the street the telegram and if the lightning had struck in ten feet of me I could not have been more surprised.

"As I grow older I cling more closely to the friends of my

Digitized by Google

earlier life. God has indeed blessed me with some of the truest and best. At the head of the list stands my beloved W. E. H. It is more than twenty five years since we were first thrown intimately together and all that time I have had for you an earnest affection, which has never known let, cloud, or hindrance.

"Yours Sincerely

"H. H. Wyer."

"Last Thursday" he writes "the Taylors, George the First and George the second, gladdened our abode with their presence and with them came a lot of their friends. It was a picnic of the best sort, to us at least. We have many earthly pleasures,—not one of which we deserve,—but we incline to the opinion that our joy never touches the flood except when we can gather a band of Baptist preachers around our dinner table. We have never yet found a class of men who could so fully command our love and confidence."

In October I went to Chesterfield County to teach in an Academy,—an event which started a procession of weekly letters to me, from him and from my mother, that continued, with but little interruption, to the end of his life. These letters, carefully stored away, constituted for me an accumulating and sacred treasure pile. I cannot remember when the thought first came to me that I would write his biography, but, as his life loomed higher and higher before me, the thought grew into a consuming ambition. My heart would leap at the prospect of putting such a life before the world and I began keeping, not only all his letters, but nearly all the papers containing the products of his pen. He knew near the end of his life that I expected to write his biography, but he nearly always tried to laugh out of court any suggestion that his life might be worth writing or that anything he did was worth recording and, even at that late date, I never dared to ask him to keep copies of his letters for such a purpose,—and he never did.

He settled upon Sunday night as the time for writing to me. His first act upon reaching home from the night service would be to read the Sunday paper, which was always put in its place

Digitized by Google

by his desk at the window in the front second story bed room, which was also the family sitting room. After reading the paper he would say "Well, I must write to Eldridge and away would go his pen,—his letters averaging about eight pages in length. They were written with his own hand and at the end of days of heavy strain and toil and would recite first the events of the Sabbath just closing.

He evidently had a small ocean of duties surrounding him as he penned the following warning in the "Baltimore Baptist."

"Whereas the vacation of this humble scribe is now at an end and whereas his pastoral duties will claim every hour of his time, therefore resolved that no man, woman, child, beast of the field, bird of the air, fish of the sea, nor any other living thing on, or under, the earth, no Baptist preacher, or any other person, place, or thing, shall ask at his hands any outside service from this time forth until the first of August 1887. The motion has been unanimously adopted and the meeting is adjourned."

In his first letter to me which here follows he speaks of "College Scrags". On Sunday afternoons and evenings the back parlor would resound with the laughter and clatter of the young folks, among whom would frequently be College students who were calling upon his daughters and about whom he often joked the girls calling them "College Scrags". The names of his daughters in the order of their ages were, May, Orie, Kate, Lizzie and Edith.

"Richmond, Va., Oct. 3rd, 1886.

"My Dear Eldridge:

"Sunday night this is. We are just from church. Fine day we had—large crowds and I enjoyed preaching. May has been very sick and I expect she will have to go to the country again. She and Kate have run quite a living trade in College Scrags today. Kate seems to be quite a toast.

"I am anxious to hear how your school opens. . . . If your school is not full I may be able to send you one or two more. If you take a boy as your room mate be careful in your selection.

"I hope you went to Sunday School today. Take hold and do your best for the church. "Yours,

"W. E. H."

Digitized by Google

His second letter follows quickly upon the heels of his first one and, Lo, it tells of another happpy burden which his shoulders have taken. It is a young man, hungry for College, burning to preach the gospel, but utterly lacking the means. "Come into my home" said Dr. Hatcher to him "I will find some way in which you can help me and in this way you can earn your board." The young man is now a useful pastor in one of the Southern states. Here is a letter from the grateful mother of the young man to Dr. Hatcher:

"My Dear Friend:

"I am bound to burden you again with the scratch of my pen. You have so recently done us another and still another act of kindness and I cannot let it appear unappreciated. . . Oh; that we could show in some way how deeply we do feel it. As it is I can only say 'The Lord bless you.' I wonder if those boys will ever make the men we would like for them to be.

"Sometimes I feel like shouting; sometimes I feel like weeping."

"Hundreds of young men in the ministry" writes Dr. W. W. Landrum "were assisted by William E. Hatcher in financial ways. Assemble them in front of Grace Street church, and they will outnumber the noble corps of cadets that drills on the campus of Fork Union Military Academy, which he loved so well."

"Richmond, Va., Oct. 6th, 1886.

"My Dear E:

"Things may not go agreeably, always, but you keep cool and wait.

"You must cultivate pleasant social relations with the people. Do some visiting and be attentive and friendly. Learn to love people.

"C———— will board with us. Why this is I will fully explain later. I am helping him at College and can do it better this way.

"Yours, Wm. E. Hatcher."

This practice of taking some one in his home for the help that he could give him was a life long habit with him. His wife said "At one time it was the daughter of a country pastor whom

Digitized by Google

he took into his home, that she might have an education, giving her her board and other help. There was seldom a period in his life, after he became a pastor, that he did not have in his home some boy, or girl, until they went out to College, or undertook work for themselves. He kept some boy in his house, in Manchester, all during his life there———— ———— almost living there. This last named one he helped financially and socially until he became a cashier and at the last turned against him." It was indeed a melancholy fact that not all the boys whom he helped reached the top of the ladder. Some disappointed him, some proved unworthy of his help and some were ungrateful. But these facts seemed not to discurage nor check him in his beloved task of helpfulness.

"It is another's fault, if he be ungrateful" says Seneca "but it is mine if I do not give."

Rev. P. G. Elsom, now a well known and very useful evangelist, writes:

"Dr. Hatcher took me in his delightful home 608 W. Grace St. Richmond, Va. when I was a student at Richmond College. God alone knows the influence of this christian home on my life and ministry. The love I have today for evangelistic work dates back to Dr. Hatcher's home, when I breathed that atmosphere of his love for soul winning."

No one can appreciate his ministry, during his Grace Street pastorate, without understanding that almost every week,or two, he was out in the state, "lecturing" chiefly at country and town churches. These lectures were generally accompanied by an admission fee at the door and by "refreshments" served by the good ladies of the church at the close of his performance. All over the state were the country churches struggling with their financial burdens and oftimes the lady workers, restless because their gifts were so inadequate, would say "Let us get Dr. Hatcher for a lecture" and they generally were successful in their plea.

There were always people who would decry such schemes for money raising as the ladies pursued with their refreshments and

Digitized by Google

oyster suppers after the lecture. The newspapers dubbed it the "Cooking Stove Apostasy" and he had his critics at his heels. He writes in the Baptist World:

"No, we are no champion of festive methods of raising money for christian purposes. If the men will fill the Lord's chest with money, we will keep quiet about feasts, bazaars, carnivals, etc,. But it puts an angry heat in our total anatomy to hear the jaundiced and superpious utter their scourging sneers against those who undertake to make money for the Lord by selling oysters and cream. To us such twaddle, though veiled under the guise of unusual sanctity, is most preposterous and cruel,.

"We have a friend who sells hay, mill-feed and flour. It is his business to sell and he prospers in it and he gives a tenth of his profits to religious purposes. He is praised for his marked liberality and is called a prince in Isreal,.

"The man's wife keeps house. But she is president of a girl's missionary society and teaches girls to make regular offerings for spreading the gospel. It often comes to pass that the good woman feels sad that she gets so little money for various purposes and she longs for more. Once a year she bakes cake, makes jelly and cream and prepares some choice oysters, coffee, etc., and gets some of her christian sisters to help her. The girls get flowers, make candy and bring products of their fingers' skill and all these are exposed for sale. Friends come in and buy these things—and for what? Who gets the money? Not the women; not the girls. They do it all and give it all,—not one tenth, but all—to the kingdom of God and yet behold: There be some denounce the sacred trading of the woman as if it were a sacrilege. Away with the grumbling. She hath done what she could."

Regarding his lecture trips he writes:

"Sometimes I paid my own fare, gave all the income of the lecture to the suffering church and had a day of delicious fellowship with the little band of christian workers.

"As a rule they would pay my expenses which were calculated with skillful accuracy so as to avoid giving me too little and now and then I would be surprised to find some actual compensation in the little wad of greenbacks which would be thrust into my hands as I was starting on my return."

Digitized by Google

"Be not disturbed, ye gentle and generous Christian women" he writes at another time "go right along with your valiant struggle to advance the Lord's kingdom. Do not hesitate to sell strawberries or aprons or fruit-cake. Sell at good market prices, sell good articles, sell to saint and sinner and even to fanatics if they are not too dyspeptic to digest such allowable delicacies. God be with you."

The largest burden on his heart was the needy churches through the state.

For example, here are two letters,—written, one on the 25th and the other on the 27th—which happened to be found among his papers. They are merely specimens of hundreds of similar appeals that flocked in his mail. The first is from a pastor in Campbell county:

"Dear Dr. Hatcher:

"Could you not arrange to come up here and dedicate a nice new house of worship for us Baptists? It is finished, painted and ready for use. We will leave the time entirely with you but the sooner the better. I would like for you to come above all others for I do not believe there is a minister in the United States who could do the work for the Baptist Cause that you might do in three of four days. . . ."

The second letter is from a pastor in lower Virginia:

"My Dear Doctor:

"We lay the first brick on our new church tomorrow. Our working capital is not $500. Yet we feel that we must begin. I write to ask of you a favor that you will agree to champion our cause at the General Association next Fall and also at the Portsmouth Association. A word or two in the Herald might help also. I know that I have no claim upon you for these aids except brotherly kindness; still I feel that I owe it to my brethren to ask you. If I could see you in person and have a talk with you about what our people did in two and a half years previous to the burning of the church I think our claim would in many respect take the precedence of others. . . Please give me your advice about coming to Richmond during the Summer."

Imagine letters like these coming upon him every week. What a strain on his sympathies and what a pull on his heart

Digitized by Google

strings. Each pastor who wrote thought he had a supremely urgent need and each seemed to feel that if he could get Dr. Hatcher enlisted in his behalf that he had made a long stride towards victory. His soul often melted within him at the thought of these struggling pastors. He hungered to go to their aid; and he went—went often when many of his members thought he ought not to go—often when his friends and some times when his family thought he ought not to go—but he went—to the undying joy of many a struggling country church and pastor.

"No man in the past half century" writes Dr. C. H. Herndon "has rendered such conspicuous, unselfish and useful service among the country churches in Virginia as Dr. Hatcher has done. . . He went all over the state, dedicating churches, holding meetings delivering addresses and lectures. The most obscure and feeble church could secure his services as readily as the strong and prominent pulpit. Indeed his joy seemed to be to give his strength to the weak churches."

It would frequently happen that members of his church would call at our house to see him while he was out of the city and sometimes their countenances, if not their lips, would say "What; gone again?"

One of his beloved deacons thought that he ought to reform his pastor in the matter of his goings but he soon found that his labors of love in that direction were in vain. Often when calling for Dr. Hatcher and learning from "sister Hatcher" that the Doctor was out at some country church preaching or lecturing he would shake his head as if he feared that his pastor was defying providence and bringing disaster upon himself and his church.

"My deacons" said he "used to sit up with my case wondering whether I was beyond redemption, now and then sending one of their number to labor with me. He generally ended his interview by apologizing for his intrusion stoutly maintaining that he believed that the indications of Providence were on my side. . . When I began my Richmond pastorate I told my

Digitized by Google

church at the time of my installation that the cry of the churches for my help rang for me like the voice of God and that they might as well understand that they would have trouble with me on that score, as long as they held on to me."

He was talking one day to his Sunday School missionary Vivian McKennon, about the comfort it gave him to drop his burdens and run out to the home of one of his friends in the country near Richmond and there, under the trees, make his sermon for Sunday, and thus he continued:

"I can do better thinking and working in that quiet place. Of course I do not tell everybody every time I go. I would not steal away. I would not be pastor of a church, if I had to sneak away from them; but I do not go all around every time publishing the fact of my departure."

He made the last remark with a smile, and then added:

"The other day I told David to hitch up my buggy. I jumped in and started for the depot to take a trip into the country. As I was driving rapidly down the street what should I see coming around the corner but the head of a horse that I well knew, and right in front of me hove in sight my beloved deacon F———— in his buggy.

" 'You going away, Doctor?' he asked somewhat mournfully.

" 'Yes' I replied.

" 'Will you be here Sunday?' he asked.

" 'I expect to be. If I should not be here I will have someone in my place; but it is my definite purpose now to be on hand.'

" 'Well, Doctor' said he 'this is becoming serious. You go away so often.'

" 'F————' said I almost sternly 'I am going out there under the trees to study my sermon and get my self in better shape for Sunday. You go back home and attend to your family and be a good man. I warn you if you follow me around and seek to stop me on my trips I will bring you up before the church meeting and turn you out,' and then Dr. Hatcher added with a smile 'F———— looked as sober as if he had been to a funeral.' "

Ofttimes objections would be heard from his members about his frequent trips out into the state for lectures and protracted meetings. But the "going" and the "helping" fever was in him

Digitized by Google

so strongly that he had to go and he felt sure that in the long run his church would not be the loser.

"When I was a student at Richmond College" writes Dr. J. J. Wicker, "I had two churches in Caroline County. One of these churches, Mt. Horeb, needed a new church building. The people were all poor and the congregation small, but we struggled along and got the building half finished and under cover so we could worship within its humble walls. We needed help. The Dover Association met that year at Cool Spring Church in Hanover County. We wrote Dr. Hatcher and asked him if he would come out and lecture, the lecture to take place the day after the Association. Of course he would come. He never turned down an opportunity to help the needy if it was possible for him to help. Wednesday night, during the Association, Dr. Hatcher returned to Grace Street Church of which he was pastor to conduct his prayer meeting. Grace Street church had a hard and fast rule about taking collections for outside calls, but if there was ever a man who knew how to flank the enemy's movements in a church that man was William E. Hatcher. He lectured at my church, Mt. Horeb. The whole country turned out to hear him. We had dinner on the ground and when we rounded up the cash Dr. Hatcher pulled out a handkerchief full of greenbacks and silver and said 'Add this to the pile. I got it from my folks for you on Wednesday night.' We counted it, $58.00 and when we started to pay him for his services he said 'No; it has been a great joy to be with you.' "

Regarding his absences he said "My people came. . .to welcome me after my prolonged absences by telling me that I always brought them bottles of the old wine of the Kingdom when I came back from the gospel feasts of the other churches. . . . In some unexplained and blessed way my soul would get charged with a message—heaven must have given it to me—which was the very bread of life to the thronging crowds which never failed to meet me. Their welcoming smile, their eager hand grasp and even their chidings made my pastorate a song whose enriching notes seemed full of the world unseen."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI

1886-1887

CHURCH TROUBLES. COLLECTIONS IN HIS CHURCH. THE CELEBRATED CL——— MURDER CASE.

He added a Mexican to his list of beneficiaries. He was studying at the Louisville Seminary and desired to come to Richmond College to prepare himself for the ministry, with a view to doing missionary work in his own country. He wrote to Dr. Hatcher, who finally agreed to undertake to "see him through". On the Sunday after his arrival, he put him up for a speech in the Sunday school and he wrote me:

"The Mexican made a speech and captured everybody. He is a bright fellow.

"Your absence is a great loss to me and I miss you far more than I would like to say. But it is a kind providence which opened a place for you so near home so you can come often and in this way harden us for that separation which must come inevitably after awhile. . . I am greatly taxed this week. I lecture at College on Thursday and speak at Social Union that night. I am at work on Dr. Jeter's life. These, with my editorial work and my sermons and my visiting, crowd me to the highest point."

At this time the "disturbing element" in the church was giving him much trouble. "Your Papa and I both had a sort of restless night" writes my mother on Oct., 29th, and then, after telling of some of the worries caused by certain members, she adds: "X——— is a thorn in the flesh of his pastor . . Your Papa writes every night on the Jeter book."

Digitized by Google

"RICHMOND, VA., Nov. 5th, 1886.

"MY DEAR E:

"The invitation to preside at the Baptist Congress (in Baltimore) was an amazing surprise to me as I am such a poor stick for such a business, but honors are empty and I think not much of them."

He regarded himself as hopelessly incapable of mastering the parliamantary art.

"For my humble part" says he "I make bold to say that Parliamentary Law, while having its value, never suited me. In some way my mind shut up its windows and barricaded its doors when ever there was a parliamentary tangle. Its ceaseless clatter about amendments, substitutes, previous questions, and other such contradicting bothers invariably vexed my mind and bred offensive confusion."

On one occasion, in some religious gathering—probably a district Association—he was called to the chair to preside temporarily. A little confusion in the discussion arose; a disputatious brother began to make a point of order in somewhat blustering fashion. Dr. Hatcher reported the incident somewhat as follows: "For the life of me and with my crude little stock of parliamentary knowledge, I did not know who was right, in the contention, but I drew up a resolution with myself that the belligerent delegate was in the wrong and I so announced. I had no ground for my decision except the cut of the brother's eye and the crack of his voice, but I determined that I would hold grimly to my decision that he was out of order. I cannot tell how I managed to weather the storm but it seemed as one of the proofs of a special providence for the ignorant that I came to the end with my decision in perfect shape and my colors flying."

My mother, in her next letter, refers to the "Philistines," which, being interpreted, means those particular members in the church who were opposing and worrying the pastor, and had been doing this, more or less continuously, for nearly ten years. During this long period he had been working under

Digitized by Google

the sting and lash of these factional influences. I well remember how, as a boy, after hearing father and mother talk around the fire at night about these disturbers and after seeing the anxiety that it caused him, I would boil with fury against the recalcitrants. It weighed on my mind and on Sundays during the time that my father was preaching my mind would be employed chiefly in wondering how the sermon was striking the beliggerents.

My mother's letter to me of Nov. 10th, ran as follows:

"You know I wrote you that the Philistines had been at work. C———— seems to be the tool of the party. They have tried their hand on Mr. A————, with what success I know not. He talks freely to your Papa and seems friendly but I have my suspicions. . . . The situation is unpleasant and gives us trouble. We do not talk—try to be quiet and trustful—whether there will be any outcome from it we cannot tell.

"Last Sunday your Papa preached on the text, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee.' I never heard him preach better. He seemed to have power given him to speak the truths of the gospel. He said only those had the body guard of angels to attend them who walked in the way of the Lord,—none other need flatter themselves that they would have a celestial guard to prevent their dashing their feet against stones. He seemed to be almost inspired said he enjoyed preaching more than usual. Rev. John Bagby came last night and Dr. Owen will arrive tonight."

In writing about the Baptist Congress, at the Eutaw Place Church in Baltimore, over which he presided, he said "My duties as president, were, like my honors, very light." In another place he touches up his Baltimore visit in playful fashion. He calls it "a festival of delight" and then adds:

"It is true that when they perched us up behind the floral barricade at the Eutaw Place pulpit and we essayed the awkward role of speaker of the House we felt that Nature, or somebody else, had committed a blunder in putting us there, but when we could quit the meeting, slip across the square and

Digitized by Google

take refuge in the happy home of brother Eugene Levering and when the Baltimore Baptists swarmed around and gave us old time handshakes and when we went to Baptist headquarters and saw Wharton, Barron, Weishampel and Woodward and when we went to the Social Union and saw the Baptist crowd and sat by the beloved Hiram Woods at the banquet table and were so lovingly greeted by the 'old Shepherd,' Ellis, Rowland, Dixon and the rest we felt that it was good to be there. This is a breath-taking sentence but it takes a big sentence to tell the glories that belong to the brother who takes a visit to Baltimore. We return thanks to all concerned and love them better than ever before."

My mother writes on Nov.22nd:

"In the midst of the wickedness of some of the members the Lord seems to be blessing him with the ear of the people. I sometimes wish that his friends would stop telling him what the ——— party say. He says it will not hurt him for them to tell falsehoods on him—but it worries me, as it does him. When I tell him to follow up their stories and confront them he says 'No that would make a fuss. Whenever I take it out of the Lord's hands and attempt to manage it I know not what will come. Let it rest where it is.' I dont know but what that might be the Lord's plan however—to apply the knife and cut out the sore.

"Some of the members are more enthusiastic over him than ever. He has the heart of all the best of the church. . . We are well and I feel that I ought not to let trifles worry; nevertheless it is the little foxes that spoil the vine. We have more need to ask grace for little cares than for greater ones."

"When a man does you a mean, malicious trick and that without provocation, what do you do?"

To this question he replied: "Well we first get hot, and then we walk out in the back yard and let the wind blow on us until we get cool. What do you do brother?"

But, while his pastorate had its irritating features, yet his church, as a whole, was the joy of his life. They rallied about him with affection and enthusiasm and, more and more, came to do his bidding.

Digitized by Google

Churches in these days often smack their lips at their shrewdness in locking the gate against any out side public collections that are not authorized by the church. But not so, at that time, with Grace Street Church. Dr. Hatcher's collections in his church for needy causes were so bright and hearty that they became an attraction. Verily Grace Street Church became the tramping ground for all manner of worthy appeals from pastors and other men with special burdens. Was Grace Street impoverished by this? Were the members stampeded by such frequent cries for help and did the public take to the woods, at the sound of the beggars? Verily No. The church grew as the result of her greatheartedness. Alas, for the scary and narrow prudence of many churches. They may lock their doors but, in so doing, they shut out not only many needy cases, but also many of the richest experiences that a church can have. The struggling country churches of Virginia knew that their application for aid would receive a friendly response from Dr. Hatcher. In fact, from other states the cries for help would often come. For example, on Sunday Nov. 28th, he wrote me:

"J. M. Pilcher preached for us this morning and then took his collection. Tonight I preached on Baptism to a house nearly full and then brother Stakeley of Charleston talked about the earthquake and pulled us on another collection."

Many were the "pulls" that were made on old Grace Street and every pull brought some treasure. Many were the Sundays on which the congregation would see some plain looking preacher walk out on the pulpit with the pastor. During the service he would probably offer a prayer or read the Scriptures. The congregation would surmise that "something was coming." After the sermon Dr. Hatcher would address the congregation somewhat as follows:

"Brethren, this is brother ———— ———— I wish you would tell me what I shall do with him. He has designs against you. He is pastor of a little church out here in the bushes, in Page county, and his people are worshipping in the public

Digitized by Google

school house, and his congregation is twice as large as the house and he wants a church building, but I told him that you were poverty enshrined and to go back home and not expect to have a church building like other churches; but he has'nt gone."

"How many members have you brother?" he would say turning to his trembling visitor:

"Sixty Seven."

"Tell them about it in four minutes and half."

With desperate earnestness the brother would pour out his words in those four and a half minutes!

"Well brother ————" he would say when the visitor closed "I take it back. You must not go home until you get that house. You take your stand down there by the table at the close of the service. Here are five dollars—but whether you will get any more—at any rate you stand down at the front and be ready to shake hands with any of my members who come around, and you keep one hand open, while you shake with the other. Let us stand now and sing heartily the Doxology, Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The brother from Page would walk down to the front and his crowded pocket soon told the rest of the story.

During the earlier years of his pastorate the door was barred against such collections. He said:

"I was appalled to find also that no collection could be taken in the church except by vote of the church in its monthly business meeting. The cordiality with which I abhorred that trick of Satan, I deem to this day highly creditable to my character, though I was not conspicuously courageous in waging battle against it. But I can truly say that never Jesuit, nor juggler, ever schemed more tricks for avoiding that rule than I did. We suspended it, forgot it, postponed it, tried to amend it, made appeals for money, told them it was unlawful for them to hand it in, but that there was a table in front of the pulpit and that it would hold money if it were laid upon it, or that ushers had good hearts and large hands and could be trusted. I brought missionaries there unexpectedly and they told their story and made their appeals and I, with the neatest style of ministerial hypocrisy, told of the

Digitized by Google

infallible and unavoidable rule and then juggled with the crowd and the missionaries went away regretting that there could be no collection, but with their pockets bulging with money. One night when it rained and the strict constructionists were nursing their rheumatism at home we punctured that rule and it went up in thin air, an offering I hope unto the Lord."

"Friday night" he writes me "I went with Catlett up to his church in Caroline and lectured yesterday. I feel deeply for the country people. They have a hard struggle and are very poor. You will find out much more about country folks than you ever knew and will learn to love them. They are simple hearted and more real than town folks. I never weary of going into their homes. They are helped by sympathy and it will help you to sympathize with them. I am very happy in my pastoral labors. We have had today a swarm of College Scrags. Kate brought Fanny Jones with her from church and they had a high time with the fellows."

On Dec. 3rd my mother in writing to church work says:

"It is the best panacea for all the ills of life of which we seem to have had our share lately. I hope for better times though I sometimes feel that the skies will never be any brighter here."

His next letter shows that he kept in touch with the matrimonial prospects of his niece, Nettie.

"Richmond, Va., Dec. 5th, 1886.

"My Dear E:

"It seems hardly fair to select Sunday night—my dullest moment for writing to you. But it is my time of leisure.

"Nettie's W———— glory shone in upon her the last week and said his love sick poetry to her in the regular orthodox way. She is here tonight and near me as I write. She has not yet uttered the word of final doom, but she is in a yielding frame of mind. He is to come again and by that time I think she will be ready to crown him the king of her heart.

"The interest in Cl———— is very intense. Everybody seems sorry for him and there is much hope that his sentence may be commuted. But I see but faint chance for him. I have never believed that the Governor would interfere. I have not seen him for several weeks."

Digitized by Google

The mention of the name "Cl————" opens up one of the darkest tragedies that Virginia had known since the Civil War, and, with this tragedy, Dr. Hatcher became painfully linked.

The drowned body of a young woman,—soon to become a mother—was found floating in the city reservoir and on the face of the young woman were several bruises. Suspicion pointed to a promising young lawyer, Mr. T. J. Cl———— of ———— county as the murderer. The arrest of Mr. Cl———— whipped the state into excitement. The day for the trial arrived and the bright lights of the Virginia bar were arrayed against each other and at the end the verdict was "Guilty". Instead of pouring oil on the popular agitation the verdict served rather to lash it into much greater turbulence and to divide the public into two camps,—opposite in opinion regarding the prisioner. Discussion of the verdict ruled the hour at nearly every country store, street corner and family fireside throughout the state; in fact it penetrated widely into neighboring states.

Dec. 10th was the date set for the execution and on Dec. 7th, the Governor, on being importuned for a reprieve for the prisoner, said."

"I would like to see the spiritual counselor of the prisoner."

"Send for Dr. Hatcher" said the prisoner when informed of the Governor's request.

Dr. Hatcher went—three days before the day for the execution. The public were at once on tip toe of curiosity as to whether the prisoner would make a confession to Dr. Hatcher.

"I saw the prisoner" wrote my father to me "very soon after he received the news that the Governor had gone against him. He was much depressed—far more than I ever saw him. He felt that his last hope was gone and when I prayed with him he wept. He said: 'I hope I am ready for death, but one does not like to face these things so suddenly.'

"The Richmond Dispatch" said next morning:

"As Dr. Hatcher came out of Cl————'s room he looked very, very sad. He declined to say anything to the newspaper reporters.

Digitized by Google

"No" said he "I would rather not. I dont know that the prisoner would like it."

"So saying, he politely bowed himself off."

On that some day Dr. Hatcher presented to the Governor the request for a reprieve for the prisoner. The request was granted and he had the great satisfaction of announcing to the prisoner that his execution had been postponed until Jan. 14th. *December 8th to Jan. 14th!* More than a month of suspense for the prisoner, of excitement for the public, of frantic appeals for pardon and of racking strain and toil for Dr. Hatcher.

My mother writes on Dec. 9th:

"Your Pa has had a busy time this week—mainly attending to Cl————.

"Everybody seems anxious to hear about the case and about your Pa's connection with it. They stop him and make all sorts of inquiries about it. When he went to see Cl———— Tuesday he says he looked more embarrassed than he had seen him before."

The Richmond Dispatch of Dec. 11th said:

"A rumor was widespread in the city yesterday that Cl———— had made a confession to Rev. Dr. William E. Hatcher, who was in the jail to see him".

On all sides the idea seemed to spring up that Cl———— had given some dark secret to Dr. Hatcher. It is difficult for the reader to realize the intense excitement that then prevailed throughout Virginia and even in other states. For example Dr. Hatcher received the following letter from Washington:

"HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES U. S.
"WASHINGTON, D. C.

"DEAR BRO.:

"Do all in your power to get Cl———— to confess—and make it public. Already public opinion is against you and when it once downs a man he is gone. The papers seem to infer that you try to keep his crime a secret. For the love of God check this as soon as possible."

Digitized by Google

The reporters were voracious, and the public generally were clamorous for Dr. Hatcher to tell the happenings in the jail room. Their strained curiosity almost demanded it, and his self control and courage were now put to severest test. He determined that the public clamor and criticism should not drive him into the public press with the secrets of the prison cell, and the public seemed equally determined to extract the secrets from him. His relation to the unfortunate man put upon him one of the most delicate and bewildering tasks that he had ever faced. He determined to be the judge of what he would tell the public and to choose his own time for giving information. And so he moved ahead, undisturbed by insistent appeals often smiling at the frenzied importunities of the reporters who peppered him with their questions at his house, his study and on the streets and yet whom he always kept in good humor by his playful obstinacy. It was one of his marked characteristics that he would not allow himself to be dragooned into hasty, impulsive action. He did not blame the public for being interested and curious, regarding his intercourse with Cl————. He knew that he was learning things that they had a right to know and that the world ought to know, and that were more interesting than they ever imagined. But he decided that when he did tell them it would not be by fitful little squibs given every day to reporters, to be served to the public in sensational phrases. His sacred experiences in that prison cell deserved more respectful treatment than that and he resolved that when he did speak it would be in words that the people would never forget.

He wrote to me, at this time, as follows:

"I see that you share the popular anxiety about Cl————. It is the one absorbing topic in Richmond and many persons say that they cannot think or dream of anything else.

"My connection with the case has given me a troublesome and unpleasant notoriety. The reporters swarm around me and seek to extract every possible item from me. They get nothing and seemed sorely vexed by my stubborn taciturnity. . .

Digitized by Google

"As for the matter of a confession—the one absorbing topic of curiosity —I think it is best to be silent. You would be amused to see how I am besieged, even by strangers and friends on the subject. From every quarter I hear that I am discussed with almost as much concern as if I were the principal actor. Only here and there I am blamed for my sympathy with him. This, of course, gives me no trouble. I feel the delicacy of my position and need wisdom. I am anxious to be faithful in my efforts to help the poor soul to prepare for its flight.

"I have written thus fully because I thought you would long to hear. I have said nothing that you may not repeat to others, if you have occasion to do so. I will visit him two or three times this week and if anything should occur of interest and proper to repeat I will write again."

One day in the prisoner's cell a tragic scene was enacted. Dr. Hatcher said to the prisoner in a kindly tone and yet with firmness:

"I feel that I must say several things to you:

"The last act in your sad career is drawing to a speedy end. Nothing can now be done for you, and I beg you to turn from any further hope of release, and prepare to enter that eternity which is at hand.

"I do not know whether you are innocent, or guilty, but with you that is a simple question. If you are innocent it is a joyful fact for you—but even your innocence will not save you. Your hope must be built not upon your innocence of this charge, but on Christ the Son of God.

"But the evidence against you is very strong. Three tribunals have practically pronounced you guilty. If you are guilty, your guilt is terrible and you dare not hope for mercy if you appear before God's Judgment Bar with your unconfessed guilt upon you. But you must consider that a mere confession will not save you. If guilty of this crime, you cannot be saved without confession and your confession must be voluntary and not forced out of you by fear of the gallows; but it is also true that, even with your confession, you cannot be saved except through your faith in Christ as your redeemer."

"Now let me say" continued Dr. Hatcher "I will accept any statement you make to me as to your guilt, or innocence, as final, and I shall act upon it."

Digitized by Google

"I am not guilty, Dr. Hatcher. I am innocent of the blood of Lillian M————," said Cl————.

"If you make that statement to cover the whole case" replied Dr. Hatcher "then I accept it and will treat you accordingly."

Cl———— also added:

"I have never had much hope of deliverance since the verdict of the jury, but I have felt it my duty to fight against the shame and cruelty of the gallows, and besides the love of life is very natural."

On Dec. 15th my mother wrote me:

"People are crazy to hear whether Cl———— will confess or not, and seem determined to try to drive your Pa into talking about it."

In a letter to me of Dec. 19th, he said:

"Tonight I preached on 'Confession' which put the crowds to speculating about Cl————. It seems that all I do is watched with a keen and eager curiosity. I discussed the elements of a good confession and the people could easily see what my notions of an acceptable confession were.

"Cl———— is terribly excited about the watch key. He says that Joel has stated a falsehood about it. I know not what to think about it. I told him not to set his hope on any earthly thing. I see no chance for him except in such extraordinary Providences as rarely come."

The tide of sentiment in favor of the prisoner seemed to be rising. Mr. Edgar Allan, one of Richmond's most brilliant lawyers, became interested in the case, declaring "More people believe him innocent today than ever before." He intimated that witnesses had been suborned.

Dr. Hatcher found himself between two forces. The courts pointed to the prisoner's guilt and execution, while the prisoner himself, whose friend he was seeking to be, was pleading an opposite course. He had to pursue a path, marked by respect for justice and truth, on the one hand, and on the other

Digitized by Google

hand by sympathy for the prisoner, who was leaning upon him.

As the fateful day, Jan. 14th, drew near, everybody seemed to be expecting something startling to happen.

On Jan. 9th., five days before the date set for the execution, he wrote me:

"There is no hope that I can see for Cl———— and I think that he has pretty well given up. He seemed more flushed and excited yesterday, than I ever saw him before. He excited my deepest pity. He could not talk so placidly as usual, and I felt a suspicion that he was less emphatic in asserting his innocence, than heretofore. He said: 'if the worst comes to the worst I am anxious to avoid everything sensational at my execution. I have made my statement in my book and I shall have nothing more to say.' But this may all be changed. He has now to turn his face away from the world and look squarely at death and eternity. When he ceases to deal with the engrossing and tantalizing schemes for his escape from his doom and finds no lingering gleam of hope, he may not be able to hold up. If he is guilty, it will be hard for him to meet death with the damning secret in his soul.

"And yet he is in a fearful dilema. He cannot confess without bringing the blackest suspicions about his family. If the watch-key was his, then brother and aunt are guilty of perjury, for they swore that it was not. They would be liable to arrest. Then, too, his book would go for nothing.

"I have not even yet surrendered all hope of his innocence. But I am very doubtful. I have not sought to drive him to a confession. This I could not do, except on the assumption of his guilt, and that in the face of his professed innocence. Besides, I think a coerced confession is worthless.

"The case is extremely perplexing to me. It has crushed me into a painful depression. At one moment, I fear that he is guilty and will die with a lie on his lips; the next, I think that he may be innocent and I fear that it will be a judicial murder, and sometimes I imagine that the terror of death will wring a confession from him when it will do him no good.

"I seem to myself a very feeble and incompetent counselor, not to have advanced further with his case. But I have advised with other men and they say that my course has been right. I have sought to be faithful with him and cannot see that I can

Digitized by Google

have much occasion for reproach when it is over. What I have written must prove unsatisfactory and bewildering to you. I send it because you will expect something and not because I am anxious to write about it."

"You must wait until next Sunday night, and then I will give you the end of the dreadful matter."

The fight to save the prisoner's life was redoubled. An appeal was sent to the members of the Legislature.

"The reporters have a notion" said the Dispatch "that Dr. Hatcher knows something which would be intensely interesting to the public if he would only let it out." In Lynchburg a poll was taken and 70 persons, out of 100, thought that Cl———— ought not to be hung, but that his sentence ought to be commuted. It was announced that three jurors who condemned Cl———— now favored his sentence being commuted and would sign a petition to that effect.

Only one day remained. One o'clock, on the next day, Friday was the time set for the hanging. On Thursday night, with the pressure becoming so heavy, Dr. Hatcher decided to make another effort with the Governor. He called upon him and laid before him an application for a further reprieve, but no answer was given that night. "Your father found the Governor saturated with a belief in his guilt" said my mother. The hours of that night dragged with leaden feet for Dr. Hatcher as well as for the prisoner. Next morning, after breakfast, he set out for the prison to await the events of that direful day, for he had promised that if the prisoner was to be hung, he would go to the scaffold with him. As he walked to the Jail, he decided that he would suggest to the prisoner that he take with him to the scaffold the prayer: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." He reached the jail and the little group in the prisoner's room showed suppressed excitement. The attorney was at the Capitol, busy with his final appeal to the Governor. The execution was to take place at 1 o'clock. Dr. Hatcher read one of the Psalms to the prisoner and Cl———— stopped him and said:

Digitized by Google

"Dr. Hatcher, I have had but one prayer on my lips today and that is, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.'" "That is the very prayer" said Dr. Hatcher "that I had decided to suggest that you take with you to the end." After the reading Dr. Hatcher led in prayer.

In the meantime, the strain of suspense, as they waited to hear from the Governor, became almost intolerable.

Dr. Hatcher had presented his plea to the Governor on the night before and Mr. Crump and others were pressing the appeal upon him in that last hour. At about twelve o'clock, Mr. Crump was seen approaching the door. Instant silence fell upon the little company and, as the attorney entered, he announced that the Governor had refused to interfere in any way with the execution. The prisoner's "knees trembled and almost smote each other. That was the terrible moment for him." Dr. Hatcher and the prisoner, in those next awful moments, were left alone. As soon as the last person had moved out and the door was closed, the two knelt in prayer. When they arose to their feet, Dr. Hatcher turned to the prisoner and said to him in as kindly a tone as he could:

"All earthly hope is now passed and death is at hand. I suppose this will be the last moment you and I will be alone and if there is anything you desire to say to me it must be said at once."

"No; Doctor, I have nothing to say. My statement must stand as I gave it."

"I want to say to you, Dr. Hatcher" he continued "that the Bible has been a great comfort to me and I would certainly have broken down but for its promises. My trust for the future is in Jesus Christ and I have no fear beyond death."

At 12:30 o'clock, while Cl———— was dressing for the scaffold, Dr. Hatcher stepped outside and engaged in conversation with Mr. Crump. "The faces of both of them" said the Dispatch "betrayed excitement, which they struggled to repress and hide." After a few minutes, Mr. Crump left.

Then commenced the march to the scaffold. The big heavy

Digitized by Google

door swung open and the party slowly filed out of the room,—Sergeant Mason in the lead, Sergeant Smith and Cl———— next, with Dr. Hatcher and Sergeant Allen, behind them. With measured tread they moved down the passage to the top of the stairs, where they were joined by four police officers. Down, down the two flights of steps they walked and, as they began their descent, the throngs outside the jail caught sight of the prisoner and the hills resounded with their wild shouts. They reached the bottom of the scaffold and then began to ascend the sixteen scaffold steps. It must have been a weary climb for more than one of that party. They reached the platform and Cl———— walked to the trap door and stood over it. Dr. Hatcher walked to the right corner of the platform to the front of Cl———— who looked very solemn.

Absolute stillness prevailed. Sergeant Smith drew forth a paper and read the death warrant. When he finished, he said to the prisoner: "Do you wish to say anything?"

The prisoner looked up at him and with a pleasant smile, but with quivering lips, said:

"No; I do not want to say anything."

"Not a word?" asked the sergeant.

"No Sir."

Sergeant Smith stepped back and signaled to Dr. Hatcher, who walked forward and said:

"Let us pray."

He had his hat in his hand, and kneeling down, he offered a prayer in a clear voice and earnest manner. Among other things he said (as reported in the paper next morning):

"We humbly beseech thee to come and look down upon thy servant now in this, which is to be the hour of his supreme affliction and trial, and we commend him to thy tender mercy in this hour when human law pronounces this sentence against him, when human friendship and human sympathies are unavailing. Oh, that the mercy of God may be abundantly bestowed upon him; may his sins be freely forgiven; may he be able to hold a firm and sustaining grasp of the promises of that Savior that years ago he confessed. And we pray that

Digitized by Google

the light of the true God may shine into his mind and that the promises of the Lord may be to him full and bright. Oh, God, our father, we commit his spirit into thy hands and pray that he may be able to say, 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.' Oh, God, wilt thou show thy mercy upon all who are here and upon the broken hearted ones who are away, we ask for our dear Redeemer's sake Amen."

Dr. Hatcher arose from his knees and stepped to Cl————, and said:

"Have you anything you wish to say?" Cl———— said something to him, after which Dr. Hatcher turned to the crowd and said:

"I am requested by the prisoner to utter just one word and that is that at this moment of his death he carries no ill will to any man on earth." He then turned to the prisoner and said:

"Is that all?"

With a nod of his head he said, in a low voice:

"Yes."

Dr. Hatcher, with his hat in hand, then shook hands with the prisoner and said to him; "God bless you."

"Good bye, Doctor," replied Cl————, "I am very much obliged to you. Please try to comfort those at home, and give them my love."

Sergeant Smith beckoned to one of the policemen, who came forward and acted as an escort for Dr. Hatcher, as he wended his way through the crowd and out into the street. Just before he reached the gate, he turned around and looked towards the scaffold and his eye fell upon Cl————, with the rope around his neck. Out from the prison gate he went, with his hat in his hand. He never stopped until he reached the home of his friend, Dr. R. H. Pitt, seven blocks distant. "When he reached my house," said Dr. Pitt," he was as white as a sheet and he had come all the way through the streets, on that January day, without putting on his hat; he still carried it in his hand. He was greatly wrought up—more than I had ever seen him

Digitized by Google

before. We made him lie down on a couch where, after a while, he became composed."

He had gone to Dr. Pitt's house for a purpose. He knew that on the next morning the papers would blazon abroad the scenes attending the hanging and that in nearly every mind would be the query "What did Cl————say to Dr. Hatcher?" He had promised that after the execution he would unlock his lips and speak to the public. That time had now come and so, with his soul quivering with the horrors of the last scene, he wrote out the tragical story,—wrote it in the shape of an "interview", with Dr. Pitt acting as the reporter.

Next morning, as the Richmond Dispatch sped into every section of Virginia and into many other states, it carried on its first page this "interview with Dr. Hatcher." It was four columns in length and was literally devoured by the reading public. I well remember the eagerness of the country people, where I was teaching, to get the papers with the interview. I also remember the high praise which the "Interview" evoked from all classes. Prominent men in the state pronounced it a work of high art,—and praised it for its diction, its skill, its tone and spirit. The Interview bore the head line:

"Dr. Hatcher speaks at last."

The following are some of the questions and answers:

"Reporter. Was the effect of your association with him to increase or diminish your suspicion of his guilt?"

"Dr. Hatcher. I am not very impressible and men have to be quite magnetic to take possession of me. I traveled slowly in forming my judgement of Cl————, but I must say that while I never expressed any opinion one way or the other, I found myself gradually drifting to the conviction that Cl———— was not a murderer."

"Reporter. 'Your study and management of the case must have given you much anxiety.'

"Dr. Hatcher. 'As to the question of my personal feelings that possesses no interest for the public and on this I will not speak. . . . What to do and how to do it, so as to be of real christian service to the helpless object of my charge, were harassing and bewildering problems. At one moment, I faced

Digitized by Google

the possibility of his guilt and feared that he would brave death without a confession. At another, I wondered whether he might not defer his confession, until brought to the scaffold and then make it when it would be wrong in its motive and worthless in its effect. At another, and indeed very often, I suffered the agonies of a dreadful apprehension lest after all, being an innocent man, he might die the victim of the law's mistake.'

"Reporter. 'Do you think that the prisoner was prepared for Heaven?'

"Dr. Hatcher. 'That is a question too solemn and profound for me to touch. I believe in the immortality of the soul and in the reality and glory of the heavenly state. . . . On this question I choose to be silent and leave the result to that God into whose presence the prisoner's spirit has gone.'

"Reporter. 'Did he make any confession, or give any hint of it?'

"Dr. Hatcher. 'Not one word, and nothing occurred that suggested to me that he was struggling to keep back any secret.'

"Reporter. 'Will you be kind enough to reproduce the prayer you offered on the scaffold.'

"Dr. Hatcher. 'I beg to be excused. It was a brief and unpremeditated prayer, such as the sad occasion suggested and I could not possibly reproduce it.'

"Reporter. 'Thank you Doctor; but may I ask you if, after all, you do not think he was a guilty man?'

"Dr. Hatcher. 'That I have never said and surely, at this time, it would be strange for me to commit myself to that view. I have no wish to add to the frenzied excitement, which now fills so many hearts. The poor young man is dead and beyond the reach of human sympathy. My opinion is of little worth but I knew him, as no other man did during his prison life, and, while I do not wish to discuss the matter, I must be candid enough to say that I am far from being convinced that he merited the shameful death to which he has come.' "

The story of his experience with Cl————, from Dec. 5th to Jan. 14th, has been given in unbroken form, uninterrupted by any reference to his other activities. But during all that period his shoulders carried many burdens of the pastorate and of outside matters. It was fortunate for him that he had other tasks to divert his mind from the horrible ordeal at the jail.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII

1887

AN EVENTFUL PRAYER MEETING. SEVERAL WEEKS' REVIVAL CAMPAIGN. CORRECTING HIS CHILDREN'S DICTION. SUNDAY SCHEDULE. "LIFE OF J. B. JETER."

During all the weeks of his straining experience with Cl——— he was being hampered from another direction. The disturbers in his church, who had been troubling him for several years, were still pursuing their former tactics, not only against the pastor, but also against some of the movements of the church. Their words and actions kept the church in more or less agitation and robbed the pastor of many hours of sleep. In one of his letters to his friend, Mr. Charles Pratt of Brooklyn, he dropped a hint of his church worries. In reply Mr. Pratt wrote:

"NEW YORK, 26 BROADWAY, Jan. 27th, 1887.

"DEAR DR. HATCHER: . . . You have made no mistake in opening your heart to me. . . It seems to me that I would just do my duty and never mind the thorns that meet you on the way—you will find that they are everywhere. We all have them, and I never expect this side of Heaven to be without them—so there is a pair of us. I often think of the first chapter of Joshua, I think it is where he is told to be of good courage.

"Your Friend,

"Charles Pratt."

"Finally the situation with these members grew unbearably acute" he said "and things were done that I would not dare to tell. They were too bad to tell and showed what good men would do when untracked and reckless. Events were so serious

Digitized by Google

and fierce that they brought me to a pause. I took my burden again to the throne and asked for instructions. For the first time I felt willing to go, if the Lord indicated clearly enough that it was his will for me to go, though, to save my life, I could not feel that it would be best for me to be eliminated under the dictation of that faction.

On Jan. 30th he wrote me:

"My work here is very heavy on me and often burdens me with anxiety and care. At times I sigh for liberty, but work is the law of life. . . . . .

"I am tugging away on the Jeter book—a fearful work."

While in this uncertain condition, he opened his mail one day and found a letter extending to him a call to the presidency of the Judson Female College of Marion Ala. He said "I had asked the Lord if he would have me go, to open the gate and now the gate was open with a most attractive offer in sight."

After two weeks consideration, he decided to decline the call to Judson College. He would not run from trouble. "Never was the situation more complex or menacing" said he. Not a single member knew of his call, or his declination. It was on Wednesday morning that he decided to remain with his church. On that night he went to his prayer meeting, determined to ask his church to begin a revival campaign. He hoped that such meetings would melt the heart of his church and weld them into harmony and co-operation. He went with trembling, however, because the men who were giving him the most trouble had been saying during the winter that the time had not arrived for revival meetings,and he feared that they would oppose his suggestion about having the meetings. That nigh t the climax came. When the pastor presented the question as to whether the meetings should be attempted and if so, who should hold them, the leader of the opposition arose and said:

"I believe we ought to hold the meeting and I am ready and

Digitized by Google

anxious to go into it. I want to be converted over again, for I do not feel ready to die as I am. And" said he "I want our pastor to hold these revival meetings and not Mr. Needham, or anybody else."

No sooner had he said this than brother ——— a close associate of the last speaker in the factional troubles said:

"Brethren, I am in favor of our pastor holding the meeting. I want to go into it untrammeled. The time is come for our people to stop tale bearing and misjudging each other. A meeting we must have and I want the pastor and nobody else to hold it."

Brother ——— jumped up and said:

"These are the best speeches I have heard for fifty years and I move we have a hand shake."

"Not yet" spoke up Dr. Hatcher "put it off a little while; may be there are some who are not ready for it." He did not wish to force matters. But the meeting increased in power to the end, one brother saying "I have never known what religion was until tonight."

"That night in the prayer meeting" said Dr. Hatcher "those, who for so many years had blocked my way and embittered my existence, one after another, quietly laid down their arms and declared their loyalty to me as their pastor and their readiness to work with me in the future. There it was—the end had come in a moment, unannounced and was greeted on my part with no noisy demonstration, no thought of victory in my soul, but boundless gratitude to God and with confidence renewed in simplest terms with those who had fought me. The war was over and I was there."

It seemed to be the ending of a ten year's strain and every body was happy. Dr. Hatcher rejoiced in it, but he gave forth no tumultuous shout. He knew the frailty of human nature and postponed his celebration of victory. On a former occasion some of these hostile brethren had seemed suddenly to have abandoned their opposition and to have become very friendly to him. I, a boy, was jubilant about it at that former

Digitized by Google

time and when I then spoke to him about it as we were driving down town in the buggy, I expected to find him even more overjoyed than I was. But he put some new thoughts in me by replying: "Ah my lad human nature is a weak stick and we must not lean on it too heavily. I rejoice in their new friendliness but I never stake my destiny on men."

He believed in their good intentions and hoped for the best.

His mail brought him a letter from his friend, Dr. J. L. M. Curry,—at that time U. S. Embassador to Spain, praising him for his course in the Cl———— case. "He spreads the glory very thickly upon me—indeed he overdoes it" he wrote me. His reply to Dr. Curry's letter was as follows:

"Richmond, Va., Feb. 16th, 1887.

"My Dear Brother,—Your letter refreshes me. It comes at a good moment—after I have cooled down from the excitement of my prison ordeal. The experience was essentially bitter to me in many respects and peculiarly so, in the coarse and unsavory sort of notoriety into which it brought me. That you thought well of my performance is pleasant to me. It is exceedingly agreeable to extract some drops of comfort from an affair which had so many painful features.

"My own affairs—not financial are in a happy frame. . .

"My church is in a blessed state. You know I have had a rough and discordant element to contend with. It has been an arrow in my heart and often I faced the question of pulling out, but a strong hand held me. I could not go. This winter I had the offer of another field. . . I declined. That day a cyclone struck my church—a holy, heavenly thing it must have been. It came suddenly and blew over the ramparts of my hostile and cranky brethren. They furled their banners and fell into line. So far as I can see they are in perfect accord with me. As I had no resentments to conquer, I met them far down the road and took them to my heart. It is the Lord's doings and marvelous in the sight of men. Last night we began a meeting and the signs are most propitious. . . I blush to send you such a preposterous letter,—so tedious, so egostistic and so laden with gossip. I can trust it with you but I fear that if it should fall into Mrs. Curry's hands she would despise me forever. Send me some points on Dr. Jeter and I will see if I

Digitized by Google

cannot tone myself up for a better performance by the next time. . . "Yours as ever

"W. E. Hatcher."

Never before had the light shone so brightly on his pastorate as now. The momentous fact with him, at this time, however, was his revival campaign.

"I never saw such beaming faces," he writes. "Everybody seems in ecstasy—so much so I fear they will not work for the salvation of sinners as they ought."

The meeting ran for seven weeks, during which time the entire leadership of the campaign, including all the preaching was upon his shoulders. On Sunday night, at the end of the third week, he wrote:

"It has been long indeed since I have had such a satisfactory Sunday. Our Sunday School had over six hundred in it. The congregation packed the floor and nearly filled the galleries."

Two hundred men came forward to express their devotion to Christ and the church.

"It was a sight not to be forgotten. In the afternoon I had nearly 100 in my Boys Meeting. This was followed by a Men's Meeting, which must have had 150 in it. Tonight we had a packed house."

"I never saw the church work so well. . ." said he; and he also remarked that he thought that Grace Street, the First and the Leigh Street Churches ought to divide, and then he added: "We could multiply by dividing. This is spiritual mathematics." At the end of the fourth week, on Sunday night, he writes and, after telling of blessed experiences at the morning and afternoon services he says:

"Tonight the crowd was simply overwhelming. It packed every part of the room. . . . .

"I find myself decidedly nervous tonight. Miss Effie is charmed with Grace Street. She thinks it a great church and

Digitized by Google

really, if its present excellent spirit continues, it will be the happiest church and the most useful in the city. . . There is the usual parade of Collegians in the parlor tonight."

"The harmony is delightful" writes my mother. During these meetings the printer was ever bombarding him for copy for the Jeter book. At the end of the fifth week, my mother writes me:

"Your father has been so wrought up that I am similarly affected with him through sympathy, and long for the time to come when he will be freed from his exacting work of preparing copy. . . I am firmly convinced that he has too much on him and that he must not keep on any longer than is necessary, at this rate. He is more nervous than I have ever known him, and has not so much elasticity and spirit as formerly."

On Sunday night he wrote me:

"I have had another busy Sunday on the earth. Things have rolled high at Grace Street. About 660 in the Sunday School, which is the highest for many days. The morning congregation was simply grand—many ladies had to go in the gallery. There must have been 150 young men and boys in the gallery. The lower floor had a solid pack. There were two conversions.

"In the afternoon I had my boys meeting—attended the funeral of Miss Mary Ballou's sister and went to S. S. Association. When I reached home I had company—Mr. McRae and Mr. Wycliffe Abrahams. Tonight another overflowing crowd. I baptized seven."

The tide of the meetings continued to rise. During the sixth week my mother wrote on the 15th:

"Mr. X———— told your Papa last night that he never meant to give any more trouble in any church—six years of strife had cured him. He said he and Z———— greatly appreciated your Papa's kindness to them, but he thought that some people might object to their being so prominent and that he must not call on them to pray so often. Your Papa hopes to finish his book in two weeks."

"Today was great," he writes. "We had 672 in the Sunday School. I have not preached a sermon that seemed to move the people so much as that of this morning. It is so blessed

Digitized by Google

to be upheld by the free sympathy of my people that I seem not to get weary.

"Several denominational questions have been giving me some embarrassment of late. They press me heavily, when I feel that I am too much engrossed to consider them. I cannot mention them now."

On the 13th, he wrote me:

"I anticipate the completion of my book with something of the feeling with which a convict must contemplate his release from prison. I will have a jolly time resting when the burden rolls off,—if the Lord will."

In one of his letters to me he gives a peep into the dining room with the family at the table. Some of the children were in the habit of exaggeration in their table talk and he set about breaking it up. He writes me:

"The chief topic of conversation, at our table, is exaggeration, May and Lill are the exaggerators and Edith and I are the critics. I am constantly struck with the care and accuracy of Edith, in what she says. It is rare that she ever overstates anything. Her moral perceptions are very clear and correct. She can see and state a thing with singular fidelity. Everything is real to her. She is as yet (and may she ever be) a stranger to all crooked devices."

He finds yet another interloper in the dining-room vocabulary,—the word "certainly." "I certainly am thirsty," "I certainly did have a good time last night," "That certainly is an interesting book" were some of the exclamations by which some of the children at the table overworked the much abused word.

"We are having a lively time at the table" he writes "with the rule about the use of the word 'Certainly'. If any one uses the word ten times he, or she, loses butter for one supper. May has gone without butter five times. Tonight she, Coonie, Lill and Edith went minus butter at supper. Kate has been on the hooks only once. They enjoy it–that is, the fun. Lill and Edith insisted on 'joining' and of course they had to suffer the penalty which they think is quite an honor. The butter bill is much reduced—to the satisfaction of your mother."

Digitized by Google

He waged war against the overloading of sentences. For example, he wrote me about the "exaggerators" and added the following:

"I think you ought to try your hand on an article for the Baltimore Baptist. You might work it up carefully and by degrees. It is very important for you to practice the art of composition. Try to write—not much, but well."

I accepted his suggestion shut my door out at my country school and seized my pen. The subject chosen was "Memory" and I wrote and rewrote and adorned and polished the article until it seemed to have reached the pinnacle of my literary art and I sent it to Richmond for the critical eyes of my father. In a few days the manuscript came back to me accompanied by the impressive announcement that the article was good but that it had an overstock of words and must be cut down. I caught my breath and began my word slaughter. Some highly prized adjectives were regretfully mustered out of service. I shook the sentences, boiled and pressed them down, and when I thought I had reached the limit of reduction, I sent him the result. To my surprise and chagrin, a few days later, on opening my mail, I found again my manuscript returned to me with a letter from my father stating that I had greatly improved it, but that it was not yet ready for publication and must be boiled down again. Once more I tugged at it, pulled the paragraphs to pieces, reshaped the sentences and struck to the earth every interloping word and sent the paper to him once more. I never saw the manuscript again, but in a week or so I had the new, strange pleasure of reading my article in the Baltimore Baptist. The opening sentence in the manuscript, which I first sent him read as follows. "It is one of the distinctive marks of the mind that, whatever it once acquires, it ever afterwards retains." That sentence seemed to me to have a swing and dash that would startle even the elect. When my father got through with me and I got through with that sentence it read "What the mind acquires, it holds."

Digitized by Google

"Trim, polish and refine every paragraph" he writes at another time, "sharpen to the keenest edge, and let each word bear part in giving body to thought."

At one time, as editor of the Herald, he uttered a warning to those who wrote articles for his paper, urging them to send only the cream,—and that condensed,—of their thoughts.

"At this feast" he says "watered milk is a thing of loathing. To men of genius there are times of unwonted inspiration—when their powers are quickened into extraordinary vitality, when they catch new and ravishing visions of truth and when their thoughts leap into living words. Let them send us their dispatches from the mountain tops and they who read will look upward and grow better."

His life for the next six or eight months was crowded with sermons, lectures, editorials, meetings and trips in many directions. He delivered a lecture to the negroes,—at which he said that he had a ripping crowd and that they almost laughed themselves pale. His Boys Society under his direction, gave an entertainment with their dialogues and "hundreds were turned away."

"Richmond, Va., April 24th, 1887.

"My Dear E:

"Here's my day:

1. Breakfast at 8:15.
2. Study sermon till 10.
3. In Sunday School till 11.
4. Sermon till 12:15.
5. Collection for State Missions till 12:45.
6. Dinner and company till 2:30.
7. Boys Meeting till 3:30.
8. Funeral till 4:30.
9. Rehearsal of boys till 5:30.
10. Young Men's Missy Society till 6.
11. Study of sermon till 6:30.
12. Rest and supper till 7:30.
13. Study of sermon till 8.
14. Preaching till 9.
15. Baptism and Inquirers till 9:30.
16. Boy's rehearsal till 10:15.

Digitized by Google

"The girls have had a harvest of scrags today. This must end here. "Yours, "W. E. H."

At the Southern Baptist Convention, in Louisville in May,, he engineered a collection for the purchase of a large Theatre in Havana, Cuba, for missionary work. "And it was largely due to his exquisite tact and management" says the Herald "that it came out so well. It is hard to have any patience with a man who can do so many things so well as Dr. Hatcher can."

At last, his new book, "Life of Jeremiah B. Jeter", came from the press and met an enthusiastic reception. Spurgeon, the great London preacher, said to Dr. James Nelson "I have read every word of Dr. Hatcher's Life of Jeter, and there is not a dull line in it." He had been beset with tribulations in his efforts to write it, for it was during his harrowing experience in the Cl———— case and later, during his seven weeks meetings, that he had done most of the work.

"For the man who has three sermons to produce" he writes "various religious services to conduct, pastoral calls to make, funerals and marriages to attend, company congenial, and some times very otherwise, to entertain, daily tides of letters to read and answer, with Board meetings, ecclesiastical councils, committees, ordinations and numberless outside engagements ever pressing upon him some allowance ought in common fairness to be made when he undertakes to write a book."

He wrote the above concerning Dr. Jeter's literary labors, but the words also describe his own experience in writing the Jeter book.

"What is more delightful than a life of lettered ease" says Cicero, but Dr. Hatcher's writings, which charmed many readers, were born in the stress and rush of a metropolitan pastorate. It was of course, not the ideal method of composition. It is Richter who says "Never write on a subject without first having read yourself full of it and never read on a subject without having thought yourself hungry upon it",

Digitized by Google

but the author of "The Life of J. B. Jeter," had to pick up his pen while on the run and use it amid the din of many duties."

This was his first and in some respects his most interesting book. He was fortunate in his subject, for Dr. Jeter's career was a remarkable one. He and the Doctor were born in the same home and were descended from the same grandfather. On the opening page of the book, he says:

"I harbor no grudge against noble birth and would not disparage the benefits which belong to those who spring from distinguished families. At the same time, I am so intensely American in my sentiments and convictions that I heartily endorse the popular verdict that men are to be estimated not by the accidents of fortune, but by what they are and by what they do."

After speaking of Doctor Jeter resolving to make it the rule of his life "to do his very best," he continues:

"For nearly fourscore years he walked the earth inspired at every step by that lofty sentiment. When he adopted it, he was an ignorant and unnoticed youth; but when he came to the end, a crown of honor was upon his brow."

He pictures the happiness of Dr. Jeter's old mother when he would, in the days of his greatness, visit her in her mountain home:

"Ah, those were sunny days in the life of that mother! Who can describe the pride and joy with which she hailed his coming. What charming breaks did those yearly visits make in her monotonous life. With what swelling rapture did she gaze upon her son, now rounded into full manhood, decked in thickening honors and with the seal of God's blessing upon him."

In comparing the Jeters and the Hatchers he writes:

"I have already spoken of the mercurial and bouyant temperament of the Jeters. The Hatchers are not their equals in elasticity and ardor of nature—but they are more practical,

Digitized by Google

sober and thoughtful. Dr. Jeter combined the best characteristics of both families."

He thus refers to Dr. Jeter's birthplace which was also his own birthplace:

"The house in which he was born would cut a sorry figure if brought in comparison with the stately and imposing edifices which are now quite numerous in Northern Bedford. At the time of its erection it was probably the most commodious private residence in the entire community. . . It never knew the refining touch of paint, and as a consequence presented to the eye of the stranger a weather beaten and neglected appearance. But it was not without its attractive appearance.

"Inasmuch as it happens that in describing the birthplace of Dr. Jeter I am, at the same time, describing my own childhood home, I must be pardoned for the warmth and tenderness of my words.

"Oh, with what deep passion did I love that quiet old mountain home. To my boyish fancy it was the center of the world. It seemed always to have been what it was and for awhile I never dreamed that it could change. In all the heartbreaks and woes of subsequent life I have known no sorrow compared with that sickness of heart which came with my first absences from my father's house. Even now, under the glow of an affectionate memory, the faces and scenes of those early days take on a beauty so mellow and sad that I cannot recall them except with moistening eyelids.

"Beneath the cherry tree, at the corner of the garden, slept the dust of my Presbyterian mother, who died on my fourth birthday and who, with her dying breath, prayed that her two sons might become ministers of the gospel.

"There, in his lonely old age, dwelt my father who made his last born his companion by day and always locked him fondly to his breast through every live-long night. . . Royal evenings that household used to have around the winter fires, with ample stores of apples, chestnuts and cider, sometimes singing the old songs, sometimes reading aloud the paper or the book and always ready for the spicy jest or the crafty practical joke. Alas, the house is now in the hands of strangers".

He describes the birth of Dr. Jeter. After telling of a "shed room" in the rear of the house, with "no fire place, no out-

Digitized by Google

door and only one window that looked towards the West" he continues:

"Such truant sunbeams as ventured to peer through that little window on the 18th of July, 1802, enjoyed the distinction of being the first to hail the advent of the then nameless little stranger, whose subsequent story is to be unfolded in these pages."

"The reader must have found out already that I am no blind eulogist of Dr. Jeter. Of his errors and mistakes I have spoken with unsparing candor. . . It surprised me that I could not put my hand upon anything in his later life which could be branded as manifestly wrong."

"It was said that he did not know men. . . There are two ways to find out men. The first is by suspicious vigilance. We assume that they are false and need to be watched. It is a mild form of the detective system. We eye our neighbor as a doubtful character and expect to catch him in villainy.

"The other is by trustfulness. We start with the supposition that men are upright and mean well. We trust them and put them upon their honor.

"When he turned his two blue eyes upon a stranger and subjected him to an examination he could find out about as much as a professional detective. If he convicted a man of rascality he refused to help him; if he stood the test he helped him freely; if the case was in doubt he gave the applicant the benefit of the doubt."

"The only half-hearted thing about him was his misery. He could not produce a strong case of melancholy. His lamp of hope burned dimly at times, but never went out. If he began to grow gloomy, he soon came in sight of the ludicrous."

Concerning Dr. Jeter's memory he says:

"He refused to trust his memory in the days of its strength, and it never forgave him for the wrong."

"Dr. Jeter's love of life was wonderfully intense. . . He loved nature, loved men, loved conflict, loved honor, loved to think, loved to grow, loved to learn, and loved to work, The blasts of adversity sometimes struck him rudely and his burdens often got heavy, but sorrow never weakened in him the earthly

Digitized by Google

tie. The sea of life was often rough and threw its blinding spray into his face, but the waves never went over him.

"He was not tormented by any uncertainity as to his future. He did not cling to the ship from a dread of the sea. . . I heard him say publicly several times that if his religious hopes were not well founded he would probably die without finding it out. He was so clear on his assurance, so deep and strong in his joy and so entranced by his heavenly anticipations that he said, if deluded, he never expected to be undeceived."

Concerning his end he writes:

"He did not die out of time. Let no broken shaft mark the spot where sleeps his form. Let his monument be erect, towering and complete and upon its apex hang that crown of glory which is the peculiar glory of the old.

"Time scattered snow flakes on his locks; care furrowed his face and burdens bent his shoulders; but grace kept him bouyant joyful and busy to the end. . . The ink had scarcely dried in his pen when the angel came to call him."

It is in such rich and luminous style that he tells the story of Dr. Jeter's life. He follows him through his career as pastor, author and editor closing with the chapter on "The happy end."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII

1887-1888

LOVE FOR BEDFORD. "LIFE OF J. B. JETER" CRITICIZED. DRIVING OVER THE BOY. GENUINENESS. ORIGINALITY.

He had promised his friend, Dr. P. S. Henson, of Chicago, an article for the Baptist Teacher and he received from the Doctor the following letter:

"My Dear Hatcher:

"Wherefore comest thou not to time? I am on the tip-toe of expectation for that promised article. "Now, I want you all to be so still" said the visiting Sunday School orator, "that you could hear a pin drop"; and the gamins, huddled in the Mission school, grew suddenly silent with a painful stillness. "Let her drop" said an impossible wretch. I have been waiting and keeping still. Now beloved, let her drop—only dont let it be an ordinary pin, but a javelin—a spear of Ithuriel, or something both sharp and weighty. Let her drop, next week, if possible.

"Coming for a moment to still graver matters—My heart is set on having you come to Chicago, if the thing can by any means be compassed."

There came from his editorial pen at this time a bright article on the Monkey. It wore the title, "An Unworthy Ancestor", and began as follows:

"Since Mr. Darwin and several other gentlemen have decided that we descended from the monkey, we have quite a different feeling for the monkey. It fills us with peculiar emotions to visit the Zoological Gardens. It is an outrage upon our finer affections to see our ancestors locked up in a

Digitized by Google

cage and kept on exhibition. It seems wrong for us to have to pay an admission fee for the privilege of indulging a fond glance at our forefathers. It is a great shock to our family pride when some crippled little Italian organ grinder comes hobbling along the streets and puts out one of our emaciated grandfathers, with a string around his neck, and compels him to dance for the amusement of his thankless posterity."

The next paragraph draws a picture of the appeals that were pressing him and the startling fact is that it represents the conditions under which he lived, not merely for that season, but substantially for all seasons and during all the years of his Richmond ministry.

"Letters, letters. letters. Mercy on us! What a flood! We write and we write and yet there is the pile steadily growing and frowning vengefully upon us. This wants a situation for a young man; this asks for a Sunday School speech; this is a request for some dialogues; this one has a church to build and is reaching for our pockets; this one desires a lecture and so does this, and this, and this, and five others; this anoints us with oil and solicits aid in preparing a commencement speech; this one praises us for something we never did and this lashes us for not doing something that we did; this one wants a recommendation as a teacher and this is a boy with his first piece for public print; this is a call for a commencement address; this an invitation; this an ordination; this is a bill, this another bill; Ah, mysterious life. Little dreamed we, when we got our first letters years ago, that it would come to this. But it has come."

The Herald thus refers to his speech at the College Commencement:

"Dr. Wm. E. Hatcher delivered the Tanner and Gwin medals. There is no man in Virginia who can speak so gracefully and appropriately on such an occasion as Dr. Hatcher."

He wrote quite tenderly about the love which men have for localities—that mysterious yearning for certain spots of earth. In writing of his passionate love for Bedford, he tells of how resentful he felt at the changes which he found in his old

Digitized by Google

county—ruthless changes in the people, in the homes and in the woodlands, and of how he therefore determined to keep away from the country.

"These changes hit me hard enough, at first" he writes. "I said again and again that change was an outrage and that violence had been done to the very sanctities of my childhood. Once, or twice, I kept away for years and thought that the struggle was over. Not so, Oh friends; not so; it could not be so. That mystery within me—that poignant, insatiable yearning was still alive and it would grow on me until further resistance seemed madness. The hills, the trees, the highways and the homes had ignored me, or pitilessly deserted me, and that too after I had loved them with such rich and wondrous devotion.

"And yet I had to go back. Why I went—but that question is out of order. That is a problem for the philosopher to tackle—that is, if he feels any interest in it. Surely it comes not within the scope of my purpose, or power, to tell why my local passion is so strong; but I know it is strong; it is stronger than ever. My soul would flame with love for Bedford if Bedford were uninhabited and I were to pass through it alone at night."

This summer he visits his old boyhood home in Bedford:

"As for the dear, old homestead, built by Rev. Jeremiah Hatcher a full century ago, the birthplace of Dr. Jeter, the old seat of hospitality and the spot endeared to us by many ties, we know not how to speak of it. There it stands yet, but it seems not the place it once was. We could have cried for sorrow that the garden, the orchard and old 'Acorn Tree' were gone forever. . . We roamed about the hills. lingered at the old rock-bound spring, sauntered through the woods, gazed at the quiet unchanging mountains and went again and again to the spot where sleeps the dust of our precious dead."

But he could not protract his visit. Virginia pastors were after him. Dr. L——— wanted him to attend the Potomac Association because he was "anxious that the Association make a good impression on the community." Another urged him to attend the Goshen Association, saying "I want to arrange to give you a good home, where you will have plenty

Digitized by Google

of ice and a good time. . . If you prefer to have a home nearer the church, I will give you the best I can." Another wanted him at the Mt. Hermon Association, saying. "You could thus be at the ordination and could get back to your pulpit on Sunday." Great was the love of the country pastors for him for they well knew that his heart beat sympathetically for them.

A gentleman criticized, in the public press, his "Life of Dr. Jeter," but he, instead of seizing his sword for defense, touched up the humorous side of the affair. It often happened that on occasions when others would become inflamed and when he would be expected to be excited he would dispel the panic by an out-burst of humor. In the present instance, instead of fighting for his book, he thus writes:

"Prof. ————, of Missiouri, deserves the thanks of a discriminating public. He has written a two columned article for the Central Baptist, in which he rakes the "Life of Dr. Jeter" with the fine comb of criticism. He points out the errors in the book, from the beginning to the end, particularly those in dates and punctuation. We have enjoyed the professor's criticisms exceedingly. They are candid and consistently adverse. He does not blend the sweet and bitter in tantalizing proportions. He does not feast the man who wrote the book first on caramels and then on mustard. His saccharine supplies were out and so he furnishes a square meal of mustard. That strikes us as a timely thing. The Life of Dr. Jeter has in our judgment been unduly praised and the author needs a visitation of adversity. This he has received at the hands of Prof. ————, as a sort of parting salute, as he set forth on his European voyage. We dare say that the man that wrote the Life of Jeter will enjoy this critical review more than any other surviving individual,—that is provided he survives."

The Baptist Courier opened fire on Prof. ———— for attacking Dr. Hatcher's book and called attention to the fact that Prof. ————'s critical article had in it certain mistakes of its own. Dr. Hatcher enjoyed the cross fire and in the Baltimore Baptist after saying that the Baptist Courier had found some slips in Prof. ————'s article, he writes that the

Digitized by Google

Courier "hangs him [Prof. ————] out in a somewhat rediculous light before his readers," and then Dr. Hatcher adds:

"Now we submit that Prof. ———— ought to be excused. He probably wrote his article in a hurry and had no opportunity of reading his proofs. Besides, it seems to be fated that when a man undertakes the role of critic, he always exposes his flanks. When one man attempts to whack another, he necessarily uncovers his ribs to his adversaries. We stand by Prof. ——— and recommend that the author of the Jeter book, whoever he may be, accept his castigation in good part."

His Summer travels brought him a startling experience. He was in Leesburg, Va., when, one day, a friend with a pair of horses, of which he seemed immensely proud invited him to take a ride, and he found himself seated in an open carriage behind a "bright, airy team. The roads were filled with dust" he writes:

"and the horses moved along at very moderate rate. Down the street ahead of us, at the gate of a friend of ours, stood a little boy on the carriage stone with his back to us and dressed from head to toe in pure white. Suddenly he leaped into the street and began to spin around in boyous glee. It was a simple impossibility to stop the horses and they trotted right along over him. Though frozen with terror I could see what happened in part. The fore foot of one of the horses struck him and knocked him forward, and another blow came from the knee of the other horse, rolling him over, and then the feet of the horses went over him and the front of the carriage hid whatever else occured until the carriage had passed him. My friend and I, with something of the feeling of murderers, sprang out and with infinite dread, turned back to see what was left. A bunch of clothes covered with red dirt, and a faint scream was what we saw and heard. My stalwart friend picked up what seemed to be the remains, friends ran out from the house, seized the child and rushed back. We were left at the gate and knowing not what else to do we climbed back into the carriage and took,—behind two spanking horses and along a charming road,—just the most miserable ride that any two innocent men ever had over any road. Tremblingly we drove back by the scene of the disaster and when we came in sight we saw a boy on the

Digitized by Google

carriage rock dressed in the whiteness of snow and as, in a slow walk, we came up to the gate, it was the identical boy. The ladies of the family came out full of good humor, aimiably bantering us and told us that upon examination the clothing of the boy was ripped into tatters, but, so far as they could find, there was not a scratch on the boy that drew a drop of blood, or left a sense of pain. My friend and I held a thanksgiving service all to ourselves and took another and a very enjoyable ride."

What became of the boy? Let us look forward several years and note two interesting sequels to the above incident. The boy at that time was about five years old.

"Six or seven years, after that I was walking the streets of that fair town of the Shenandoah Valley, Luray, situated near the famous Luray Cave and as we sauntered along the street quite a handsome boy came dashing by us. I hailed him and drew him into a bantering conversation. A lady standing farther down the sidewalk broke into laughter.

" 'You'd better be talking to that boy' she said with great emphasis. 'You tried to kill him once, but as the Lord kindly rescued him from the wheels of your Juggernaut, I think you ought to try to do him some good.' It was even so,—the identical lad that we drove over at Leesburg now twelve years of age. We had a pleasant chat together and I told the good mother of the boy,—as the lady turned out to be, that I would rejoice, indeed, if God would give me the joy and honor of bringing her son to Christ. We parted at that.

"Two or three years afterwards, I was in the town of Berryville assisting Dr. Julian Broaddus in a revival service which turned out to be delightfully fruitful.

"At one of the afternoon meetings there was unusual evidence of spiritual power. The christian people were all aflame with zeal for the unconverted, and, just before the meeting ended, I invited any to come who were ready to accept of Jesus Christ and enter into His service. Promptly a strong half grown fellow, full of emotion, came forward and declared his faith. I rejoiced over him though it did not occur to me to ask his name, and while I was talking with him the mother appeared at my side and said that my prayer had been answered. This was the identical boy that we had driven over at Leesburg and, through the tender mercy of God, I did have an opportunity of taking a little part at least in the salvation of her boy."

Digitized by Google

He draws a little picture of a happy visit this Summer to Culpeper, where he had—many months before—held a wonderful revival. No one knew of his coming:

"It would be hard to tell" said he "with what happy expectations we went back to Culpeper. We tumbled somewhat unexpectedly out of an early train and stood an ungreeted stranger upon the platform of the depot. A sense of isolation seized us and we indulged in depressing reflections upon the transiency of revival fame. Not a hack-man, not a baggage boy, not a loafer to recognize us and our fluttering heart grew faint and desolate. Modestly taking a back street we picked our way to the home of Major Waite, where we knew there was an elegant chamber, named in our honor and ever kept waiting for our coming. What a welcome! Bless the Lord for good folks. That night the bell of the old church, which stands on the site of the old Culpeper Jail, rang out the summons to the people to come once more to hear the Heavenly message. In short, Dr. James, [the pastor] being of an imperious turn of mind, had issued an unauthorized notice that we would preach. What a blessed night was that. A great multitude packed the house. The familiar faces of loved ones greeted us from every pew and the dear, old choir sang the mellow precious, old hymns just as they did in the great revival. It was good to be there. The air seemed laden with heavenly spices and, in the music, we seemed to hear echoes from the other shore where the ransomed dwell. We doubt not that Mr. Cleveland will have an imperial reception in St. Louis, but we venture to say that he will not extract from the occasion a tithe of the sweet delight which we found in that night of handshaking."

In some way, the letters which he and my mother wrote me during my session of 1887-8 at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, were lost and consequently I am prevented from recording his movements for this period with much detail. During October he made a little dash into Chesterfield County, which lay on the other side of the river from Richmond and, as he went hurrying through its fields and forests, he little dreamed of how familiar they were to become to him in the future years. The little Bethel Church, to which he was going, would have reasons in the future days to rise up

Digitized by Google

and call him blessed. His love for Chesterfield put that county next to Bedford in his heart.

"We slipped the pastoral collar," he said "boarded an evening train and went out to dear, old Bethel, in Chesterfield County, Va., on last Friday night to preach for Dr. Winfree, who was holding a protracted meeting. It was the glorious days of Pentecost come back again. We can hardly remember such a genuine old break-down among the sinners. How delightful it is to go out to Bethel. Old Jacob had his Bethel, but we venture it was not located in Chesterfield and did not have in its membership the Bakers, the Watkinses, Martins and Justises."

Again he writes:

"Last week we started a parvitudinous midget of a girl to school for the first time. She came back with an order to buy five books, a slate, a blank book, a copy book, a sponge, pencils and a book bag. In our helplessness, we bought them and, when they were piled upon the midget's shoulders, she looked like an Italian dwarf with his harp swung upon his back. And now we deferentially ask whether it is best for a child to study everything at one time."

He preached on Oct. 30th, on "The Weak Brother," treating the subject as follows:

"1. He is weak.
2. He is a brother.
3. Christ died for him.

I. Wherein is he weak.
   (1) Weak in conscience.
   (2) Weak in ethical points.
   (3) Weak in doctrine.
II. What are we to do with him?
   (1) Not to despise him.
   (2) Not to ignore him.
   (3) Make concessions for him.
   (4) Come down to him.
   (5) Lift him up.
III. Motives for all this.
   (1) Opportunity for high christian charity.
   (2) Helping the weak brother is helping Christ."

Digitized by Google

He attended, in November, the General Association and, that he was not idle during its sessions is seen from the following note in the Herald:

"No man at the Association did better service than Dr. Hatcher. He was constantly helping some brother out of trouble. Without seeking to detract from other noble leaders, we will say that he was the leading spirit of the meeting."

His congregation overflowed his building and enlargement was necessary. He himself yearned for a new building, but many of his members could not get their courage higher than a remodeling of the old structure. It was his policy in such cases not to force an issue. As his members were not ready for the larger project he gave them season for reflection.

The Evangelical Alliance asked him to speak for the South at their meeting in Washington. It was a notable gathering of distinguished ministers and laymen of the different religious denominations from the North and South and it was a magnificent audience which he addressed. His Subject was "The Christian Resources of the South," and his opening words were:

"The call for this Conference was startling. It rang like a fire bell in the night and there was something positively pathetic in the devout response with which it was met. This is a council of warriors around the camp fires to study the movements of the enemy, estimate our own strength and whet our swords for the conflict."

It was on this occasion that he turned during his address and saw the time keeper on the point of touching the bell to announce the expiration of his time and he startled the bell brother by quickly pointing his finger at him and saying "Touch that bell, if you dare, but only at the risk of your life."

"The roar of laughter" said Dr. Hatcher "which instantly shook the house was something not to be forgotten. I had said one thing at least which the vast assemblage approved. Just then, too, the noise subsided, and I heard Mr. Dodge say:

'Let the bell alone; let him go his way.' He didn't know

Digitized by Google

that I heard him, but there was the music of heaven and the freedom of earth in what he said."

He aided his friend, Dr. F. M. Ellis, in meetings at the Eutaw Place Church, Baltimore, January, 1888. I think I never saw him become the romping, hilarious boy to the extent that he did in his jollification with Dr. Ellis. They played bean bag one day in the sitting room. At one end of the room was a board, about a yard square, with a hole in the center, and from the other end of the room the players would seek to throw their bean bags through the hole, and the rollicking times that the two Dr's. had in these contests were interesting to behold.

In the month of April he was appointed a delegate to the World's Missionary Conference to be held in London on June 9th, but he could not attend.

At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in May, "Dr. Hatcher made one of his wittiest and most admirable speeches and poured oil on the somewhat troubled waters."

How often in religious gatherings, when the debate seemed to threaten a storm, or to get into a tangle, he would, in a few words, scatter the ominous clouds, or disentangle the discussion, and put everybody in a good humor. He had a gift for bringing matters down to a common sense basis. Dr. S. H. Greene of Washington once said to me: "That which always impressed me most about your father was his remarkable common sense."

He had what Carlyle rings the changes on so frequently in his writings,—the love of realty. He saw things as they actually were and had little patience with the fripperies and insincerities of every-day life.

This saved him, of course, from many absurdities and vain excitements. Sometimes, in public assemblies, the discussion would drift far into the air and he, who had all the time kept his eye on the main issue, would, by a word, puncture the balloon and bring the proceedings down to mother earth. This

Digitized by Google

simplicity of soul and clearness of perception made him a wise leader in deliberative assemblies.

"He taught me by example" says Dr. W. W. Landrum "the indispensableness of sanctified commonsense in dealing with problems or persons. . . He had a healthy mindedness that avoided the impracticable. . . Never was a student of human nature quicker to divide the false from the true, the apparent from the real, the sham from the genuine. . . No wonder, whenever a council of brethren was tangled in the brush of perplexity, they turned to him to point the way out of it."

Akin to his genuineness, and growing out of it, was his originality. Men called him unique and they spoke truly. From his youth he shied off from the beaten paths. In a speech before his literary society when a student in College he said: "Slander me; disgrace me, but for heavens sake call me not an imitator. If anything betrays a little, contracted soul—a narrow disposition unmanly and groveling—it is that disposition to speak like somebody else." This scorn for traveling another's track lifted him out of the ruts. The one adjective applied to him more frequently than any other was probably the adjective "inimitable," which meant that he stood apart. A writer in the Herald said that he waited for some competent pen to define, characterize and value Dr. Hatcher. "But that is no easy task" said he. "He was unique; he was a genius; in his personality he was without ancestry and he will be without posterity. Hence the difficulty to define and classify him psychologically. He was one of those not too numerous characters whose charm and power lie in the unexplored regions of original being, rather than in acquired accomplishments—in materials which the arts can cultivate, but never create."

Whence came this originality? He was original not because he aimed to be unlike everybody else, but because he was so genuine and real. "The merit of originality" says Carlyle "is not novelty but sincerity." He was unlike everybody else

Digitized by Google

because he was so absolutely himself. Men are so chained to custom that their lives are thrown into a common mould.

> "The slaves of custom and established mode,
> With pack-horse constancy we keep the road,
> Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells.
> True to the jingling of our leader's bells."

He spoke about things, not according to accepted standards, but, as he himself saw them and consequently he was ever saying unique things. No two individuals are entirely alike and he who is truly himself is original. He would not use other people's anecdotes but culled them from his own experience. No wonder that a Missouri pastor, Rev. J. E. Cook, in whose home Dr. Hatcher spent two of three weeks, said of him after the visit, "This man is full of surprises." In writing for him, at his dictation, I was ever impressed with his determination to avoid the threshed-out phrases. In almost every paragraph, as he would dictate, there would be some colloquialism—like "the courage of his convictions", or "the apple of his eye." "the wee sma' hours," etc., that would, at once, suggest itself as the appropriate phrase for his purpose. It would have been easy to have laid hold of that which was ready at hand, but, invariably, he would weave a new, fresh garment for his idea. "He had his own striking way of putting things" says Dr. P. T. Hale. "I could tell when reading the article from his pen, that he was the author, without seeing his name signed to them." To his own self he sought to be true and in doing this he marked out a new trail.

This reluctance to keeping step in a mere procession showed itself when asked by newspapers to furnish, along with many others, little squibs, or notices, for publication. Often he would, at the death of some prominent man, receive a request, often by wire from some paper that he would send them a short tribute to the deceased—say about ten or twenty lines in length to be published with several other such brief tributes, but it was very rare that he yielded to such a request,—

Digitized by Google

if indeed he ever yielded. He would usually wait and let the others speak their hurried paragraphs, and in a week, or two, he would send to the paper an article of one or two columns concerning the deceased brother and this he would seek to make a masterpiece,—something that the family would treasure through the coming years.

On one occasion during a great denominational gathering at a church where he had once been pastor a service was arranged, in which all the former pastors of the church—and there were several of them in attendance at the time—were asked to be present and speak words of greeting,—one after the other. This rapid-fire processional schedule did not suit him and consequently he was invisible on the occasion referred to. Let it not be imagined that he had an exclusiveness that kept him apart from his brethren, or made him unwilling to mingle with them. On the contrary he was a lover of men. But when doing his tasks he preferred to choose his course and differentiate himself from all others, if possible. It was only by that plan that he was enabled to do his best.

One of his daughters, Orie, was at this time a student at Vassar College, where she continued her course until she won her full diploma of graduation,—several years later she took a course at the University of Chicago, winning the degree of Ph. D.

During the Summer of 1887 he was busy in varied trips and labors. He supplied on one Sunday in Brooklyn, N. Y.

At the annual meeting of the church in May 1888, he urged his church to send out 100 of its members to form a new Church saying: "Let us not be afraid; let us multiply by dividing. God can give us another 100 members this year to take the place of these 100." One year later, at the annual meeting the clerk reported exactly 100 new members received during the past year.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV

1888

TRIP TO EUROPE. PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION. BAPTIST CONGRESS.

With his prosperous church he stood on a high pinnacle and the future loomed brightly before him. And yet his burdens,—so manifold and heavy—were breaking him down and he found that he "must either rest of die." He decided to seek recuperation in a European journey. "To cross the sea" said he "has been the dream and dread of my life."

His first step was to secure a traveling companion. One afternoon he took me in his buggy and went speeding across the river to Manchester, where lived the Baptist pastor, Rev. L. R. Thornhill. He drove up to a store and the proprietor came out to the buggy. Dr. Hatcher said to him:

"I want you and others in your church to send your pastor across the sea. I am going and I want him to go with me. He needs such a trip and deserves it and he will return to you invigorated in body and mind for his work. You take this matter in hand, and work it up among the members; put a snug sum in his hands for the trip and do it in a bright and loving way."

A light came into the merchant's eye. The suggestion of Doctor Hatcher attracted him and he accepted his commission. We called at other places and whatever may have been the details of these calls it is a fact that on July 11th he and Mr. Thornhill bade adieu to Richmond and set forth on their European jaunt. One desire that drove him across the ocean was his yearning to see and hear Spurgeon, the world's

Digitized by Google

great preacher. Regarding his trip on the waters he said, "I stood the storm, never missed a meal and came out with my colors flying." One of his lady members in Richmond had jokingly told him that she knew he would not be happy on his trip abroad because it would give him no opportunity of taking up a collection. Her prophecy failed, however, because, one day, on the vessel, Dr. Hatcher took up a public collection to aid the widow of a sailor who had a few hours before been blown by a hurricane from the ship into the sea.

Among the first places which they visited on the other side was the home of William Shakespeare, where they saw the immense old fireplace which had, on each side, a stone seat jutting out into the corner.

"As Thornhill and I imagined that the youthful William used to perch himself on these stones to eat his supper we ventured to court the inspiration of the Muses by momentarily sitting ourselves on the same stones. Thus far the inspiration has not taken effect, but I fancy I discover the premonitory symptoms in Thornhill."

London and Spurgeon loomed before him and on the next Sunday he and Mr. Thornhill heard the great preacher at his Tabernacle. After the sermon they went into a room in the rear, in which Spurgeon was receiving visitors.

"I have heard of you" he said, as Dr. Hatcher was presented to him. "I want you and your friends to spend next Saturday with me at my house."

"At seven o'clock that night" he says "I went again to hear the lovely and Christ honoring Spurgeon."

He heard him again on Monday night, when Spurgeon called him to the platform and said: "Dr. Hatcher, come up; I give you the freedom of the place to do just what you will." Dr. Hatcher spoke briefly. On Saturday he and his friends, McDonald and Thornhill, went to Mr. Spurgeon's home.

"At one o'clock" he writes "we sounded the bell at the door of the mightiest preacher of the 19th century and felt the dignity and honor of the moment.

Digitized by Google

" 'Is Mr. Spurgeon at home?' we asked as the butler opened the door.

" 'Yes—and waiting to see you' rang out cheerily through the large hall 'and I am pleased to note that you keep an engagement on time. Many persons who come to see me seem to think that I live in eternity and have no need of time but I have to use the clock and live by it' and then followed three hours and half of sacred revel."

In their stroll through the garden they came to a Summer House and there Mr. Spurgeon precipitated a lively discussion.

"Dr. Hatcher, you act as chairman" he said and then followed, "quite a fierce, though thoroughly good natured, wrangle, Mr. Spurgeon affecting all the ardor of a roaring partisan. It was a feast of romping debate and full of spice and jest."

"At about four o'clock" said Dr. Hatcher "we were summoned to the dining room. . . The tide of talk rolled in and out and was playful, or serious, as it chanced."

During the meal Mr. Spurgeon called out:

"Dr. Hatcher, I want to show you my Orphanage and my College."

"Be careful, brother" replied Dr. Hatcher "Your kindness is magnetic and you will have to be cold in your way and rough in your bearing towards me or I will surely come again."

"Oh, he could not be that to you."spoke up Mrs. Spurgeon.

In his fragmentary note book which he used during his trip abroad I find a reference to this little incident, after which he adds the words:

"I have never yet trusted, or leaned on, any man so as to make him feel that he was of great consequence to me."

After hours of royal chat and fellowship they took their leave at six o'clock Mr. Spurgeon walking a part of the way with them along the avenue beneath the trees.

"We passed the porters lodge" says Dr. Hatcher "and found ourselves once more in the vast metropolis. It was a good way we walked without a word. The spell of the most unique personality of the nineteenth century was upon us and we went

Digitized by Google

silent from excess of thought and feeling. McDonald broke the silence.

"'What do you think about it?' he said. The answer was 'We have seen a man of God.'"

The following items occur in his note-book: "Sunday August 12th; heard Spurgeon. Sat on the pulpit and made the prayer. I felt myself unfit to pray for him,—so exalted is he in my eyes. His text was Josh, 1: 10,11—A rich and tender sermon,—on 'Passing the Jordan as a type of the Christian going to Heaven.'

"When I bade him good bye he said 'I hope you wont pass over Jordan in three days',—alluding to part of his text. His deacons are so sweetly and helpfully attentive to him. They have been very courteous and cordial to me.'"

At Mr. Spurgeon's request he delivered an address before his students at the College.

He had brought something from America that he did not take back with him and that was his tobacco chewing habit. This habit was a lineal descendant of his habit of smoking cigars which he had indulged for many years of his ministerial life. Smoking had been one of his social pleasures and he greatly enjoyed sitting in company with other ministerial friends and, amid encircling clouds of smoke, spending the time in easy chat, or discussion. In fact he reveled in it.

He did not by any means go the length of Charles Lamb, who described his affection for the weed by declaring:

"For thy sake, tobacco, I
Will do anything but die."

Nor was he as reckless in his devotion as Hood, who said:

"Some sigh for this and that;
My vision dont go so far
The world may wag at will
So I have my cigar."

And yet "the cigar" brought him many, many hours of pleasure.

Digitized by Google

"It was my Boys Meeting" he said "that caused me to abandon the habit of smoking. I discovered that some of my boys were developing the cigarette habit and I found that I could not, while smoking myself, remonstrate with them."

That was in 1878 and for ten years he had not indulged in a smoke. He broke his rule one day,—by way of a little banter with Mr. Spurgeon. While he was on a trip with the famous preacher, in an English home, cigars were passed around, beginning with Mr. Spurgeon. The latter declined saying that as his American friend was too good to smoke he would abstain, whereupon Dr. Hatcher turned the tables by quietly accepting a cigar as it was passed to him and lighted it and began smoking it. "Mr. Gould" said Spurgeon, in a grimly humorous tone, as he observed Dr. Hatcher's act, "bring that box of cigars back; this is a better man than I took him to be and I believe I will join him in his smoke." This was his first and last indulgence in a cigar after 1878. However he had not abandoned tobacco altogether, but had betaken himself to chewing it. The tobacco served as a stimulus to him when languid and soothed him after his severe nervous strains.

But the chewing habit also was destined to an untimely end. While traveling through Great Britain one day and indulging in his favorite "quid" he found that there was no cuspidore near at hand in the coach in which he was riding. He had therefore to make use of the floor and soon a little pool began to gather at his feet. The conductor came through the car and, as this railroad officer approached him, he found himself thrusting his foot forward between the disfigured floor and the conductor's eye, so as to prevent him seeing it, and this attempt at concealment made him jump. "What is this I am doing" he exclaimed to himself. "Has my chewing brought me to such a pass that I am doing a thing that I am ashamed of and that I am trying to conceal from the conductor. My days with tobacco are over". Right there he signed the death warrant—never to be revoked—of his tobacco habit.

His intercourse with Mr. Spurgeon was marked by many

Digitized by Google

little pleasantries. They started one day on a trip on the cars and when they had seated themselves in the coach and the train had moved off, Mr. Spurgeon suddenly jumped to his feet exclaiming: "Oh, my; I have left my satchel; I have left my satchel; what shall I do." and his face presented a picture of woe, if not of despair. Dr. Hatcher sat looking out the window and unmoved by the noise and panic at his side. Waiting for the storm to subside he reached down under one of the seats in a very unconcerned kind of manner and drew out Mr. Spurgeon's satchel and handed it to him with the remark "I brought this along as I thought you might find it serviceable before you got back home." "Such little pranks" said Dr. Hatcher "seemed to relieve him and to break the many strains that were on him by giving him a mental diversion. He seemed to appreciate any one who would treat him as a real human being and not as a big curiosity to be stared at, or to be afraid of."

"Mr. Spurgeon" said Dr. Hatcher to him one day "why is it that you invite people to your Communion table who have not been baptized?" By baptism, Dr. Hatcher, of course, meant immersion—just as all Baptists mean in their use of the word.

"I take no unbaptized people into my church" Mr. Spurgeon replied. "I urge them to be baptized and there my authority ends. The Communion is a mere matter of church hospitality and seems to give me a better opportunity of urging the duty of immersion and when I get at people in this way I generally baptize them. If they come to our table once, or twice, and still refuse to join my church, then they are refused admittance to the table. You see I have throngs of Christian people visiting my church from all parts of the world and I do not shut the door against them; but" said he "if I lived in America and in the South where the Baptists practice strict communion, I should practice it also."

"I fail to see" said Dr. Hatcher "just how you can reduce it to a simple question of geography."

Mr. Spurgeon and a large portion of the English Baptists

Digitized by Google

were what is known as Open Communion Baptists,—that is they would invite to the Lord's Table the unbaptized, or unimmersed. It is also true of many of these churches, though not true of Mr. Spurgeon's church, that they have the open membership; that is they admit the unbaptized to their church membership, as well as to the Communion. Dr. Hatcher, with nearly all Southern Baptists, believed in what was termed "strict", or "close communion",—that is, he held that unimmersed christians ought not to be invited to the Lord's Table; they might come if they desired; he did not employ force to keep them away; the responsibility was with them, but his own opinion was that they had neglected one of the New Testament steps that came between belief in Christ and partaking of the Lord's Supper and that was baptism. He believed that in the apostolic churches only the baptized believers partook of the Communion and he saw no reason, for letting down the bars. He believed that only immersion was scriptural baptism and therefore he was compelled to believe that he could not invite the unimmersed to partake of the Supper. It was because of this belief that he and his Baptist brethren were styled, "Close Communion Baptists." He wondered whether there were any of these "Strict Baptists" in England and so he said one day "Mr. Spurgeon; I would like to see some 'Strict Baptists' before I leave England. Have you any of that type here in London?" "Why, yes" he said "A multitude of them." "Do they have any churches of their own?" "Yes, I suppose they have at least 100 churches in this city. I am constrained to say, however, that many of them are not very progressive, but they are composed of really good people."

"He took evident pleasure" said Dr. Hatcher "in giving me such instructions as would enable me to find some of the leading Close Communion Baptists of London. Some of these brethren I had the honor of meeting and found them to be among the noblest of God's people. They spoke in the highest terms of r. Spurgeon and said that in his heart he was was really th them."

Digitized by Google

The fact that there in England, where the "open communion" Baptists were so strong, his Baptist brethren "of the stricter sort" were keeping their colors flying gave Dr. Hatcher a warm brotherly feeling for the brethren and he yearned to hunt them out and give them the hand of fellowship,—and this he did and royal times he had with them. He visited their College of which Dr. Edward Parker was president. "Dr. Parker" he said "I want you to come over to America,—to the South where the "Strict Baptists" constitute a great multitude. Come next May to the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention which will be held at Memphis, Tennessee, and let us show you what a welcome we can give a brother from across the sea." The invitation was accepted. On Sunday, August 19th, he heard his beloved Spurgeon morning and night. Regarding the night service he wrote in his note book, "Heard Spurgeon and helped him in the service." On August 20th, at 11:55 A. M., he and Mr. Thornhill left England for the continent.

An amusing experience befell him one day. He decided to climb the Mer de Glace, but when he beheld the mode of his transportation, he stood appalled.

"I was gravely informed" said he "that I could not see the mountains unless I rode the mule. I love the mountains, but I loathe mules. They are animals of very uncertain qualities and, while said to be highly useful, they have served me well only when I have left them alone. By a desperate struggle I conquered my prejudices and agreed to join the mountain caravan. It was decided to make an early start and at the appointed moment our mules and guide appeared in front of the hotel. Thornhill, with his slouch hat and long overcoat, mounted his appointed steed and rode off with as much composure as if he was going to a Saturday meeting in the country. My animal was commended to me as a beast of the safest qualities and sported the name of 'Coco'. After much trembling I got astride and by the help of our Swiss guide set Coco to going and away went the caravan. We descended the mountain by another road and our mules were brought around to take us down. I can ride a mule up a mountain, but I could trust no mule to take me

Digitized by Google

down a mountain and so I walked down. I felt that night, as if I would weigh about four tons."

Far up in the Appennines, hidden away amid its mountain ranges, was a long cherished friend,—Dr. George B. Taylor. He was the friend of his early ministry and at that time he was the Baptist missionary at Rome. He determined to find him. From one railroad to another he went and then in a conveyance, driving through a wild monutain country amid chattering foreigners in the dark, he pushed his way until finally, after a checkered ride, they reached the secluded house and a knock on the door brought, first the daughters and, after them, the the father, Dr. Taylor, who, as he caught sight under the light of the lamp of Dr. Hatcher, exclaimed in joyful surprise "Oh, brother William, I have waited for you so long and longed for you so much. I feel that you bring with you my kindred and my country."

Nothing but his "passion for friendship" would have ever driven him to make such a journey. Of course they had blessed days together, but they were few and rapid in their flight and he and Mr. Thornhill were soon out and away on their jaunt through Europe. They went from city to city and a varied panorama of sights flitted before their gaze. But the most interesting sight in Europe to him was its peoples. "What I sighed for in Europe" he said "was not so much the art galleries and museums and mouldering ruins as its different peoples,—their manner of living, their home life and their church life." In London it was Spurgeon, that attracted his gaze and study. It was his Baptist brethren of "the stricter sort" that drew him on a fraternal hunt for them. It was Dr. Taylor,—hidden far away with mountains intervening, that he fought his way to see. It was Dr. James P. Boyce who, far from his American home, was lying ill somewhere in London and whom he searched for and found that he might seek to drop at least a faint gleam of sunlight into his sick room, in that vast strange city. Such sights and visits across the sea had for him an unrivalled charm, and the people that gained his interest were not necessarily the

Digitized by Google

men in high places, but they were rather the people to whom he felt knit in some way by christian ties. He wanted to see the trophies of divine grace, as manifested among his English, his Scotch, his Italian brethren, and the struggles and victories of their churches. He wrote from London to the wife of his beloved deacon, E. M. Foster,

"I have been nine days in London and have seen many new and stirring sights. I have been in the palace of the Queen, in the House of Parliament, in the bloody old London Tower, in the Cathedrals and parks, but far more than in these have I found joy in hearing Spurgeon preach and standing where so many of our Baptist fathers were burned for their faith in the Gospel.

"Somehow there is not much, either in persons, or places, to interest me unless they have something in them to make me think of Christ. One pleasure I have had—which I much wish you could have shared—that of meeting Mrs. Spurgeon. She is one of the queenliest and saintliest of women."

But we need not follow him amid the details of his European sight-seeing.

He came back to London from the Continent and had some further delightful experiences with Mr. Spurgeon, dining with him on his last Sunday in London at the home of one of Mr. Spurgeon's members.

His jovial spirits suffered a collapse on the ship soon after embarking for America. Sea sickness struck him prostrate and he declared that he saw no possibility of living for ten days,—the time required for the voyage to New York. After the ship started on its homeward voyage and he fell sick he would count over the days,—one, two, three, four up to ten and each time reaffirm his conviction that he could not live for so long; but he decided that he might keep alive for five days and he settled upon that. At the end of the five days he found himself alive and so he determined to try to live through the second five days. This device saved the day for him and brought him safely over.

Digitized by Google

He said that as he turned his face towards Richmond he realized, as he had not done before, the weakening effect upon him that had been caused by his suddenly giving up the tobacco habit. He desired, of course, that he should now be at his best, intellectually, in the social circle and in his appearances before the public. His use of Tobacco had proven a mental stimulus to him and he feared that when he wished now to be bright and active he would be dull and sluggish. He told me that the matter gave him some little concern. But not for a moment did he think of opening the door to his habit; he stood his ground although he knew that a taste of the alluring weed would quicken his faculties; he wafted the habit a fresh and eternal farewell and waited with eager anticipation for the sight of the spires of Richmond.

Already from far away Bedford had come his oldest sister, Rebecca, to welcome him home. I can see her now, aged and wrinkled, sitting erect in the front parlor at our house "waiting for William" to arrive. His church gave him a royal reception.

"It was indeed a great and touching demonstration of affection and respect," wrote Dr. Nelson.

With happy memories of his recent wanderings and with heart aglow at the thought of his church and his work, he took up once again his pastoral tasks. He was exhuberantly happy in his labors, and often his soul would be marked by a riot of joyful enthusiasm. I remember how he looked one day at a social gathering of the Richmond College alumni. I was living out of the city, but was present on that occasion and as I approached him in the throng he reminded me of a boy at a glorious frolic. His eye flashed delight, his face was radiant with happiness and his movements bespoke bouyancy and vigor. As I went up to speak to him the thought came to me: "Well, surely no one is happier here today than you." He appeared to have caught in full measure the spirit of the occasion. It was a gathering of the students and friends of his beloved Alma Mater who had gathered with bright memories of their

Digitized by Google

College and with high ambitions for her future. There was about him that day a spring and dash, and hilarious enjoyment that was contagious. "In him"said Dr. Herndon "life seemed so rich, so complete, so abundant". It was in some such spirit that he sprang to his work when he returned to Richmond. A few weeks after his return, the General Association met in Bristol and he was elected President of the body. One day, while presiding over the Association, he spied in the audience one of the fathers in Israel, N. C. Baldwin,—an aged brother whom he had met several years before, far out in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. When he saw him in the audience in Bristol—knowing, as he did, how heroically he had stood at his post in his mountain section,—he called the old man up to the platform, and, with a few fitting words, introduced him to the Association and suggested that the delegates give him the hand of loving recognition. With that, he struck up his favorite hymn, "We'll work till jesus comes" and, as they sang, the delegates thronged up to the platform and gave the old soldier their warm hand grasp. "The old veteran was much affected by this demonstration of affection" said the Herald. "It was a touching and melting scene." Dr. Hatcher loved to single out old ministers in that fashion and put honor upon them.

Soon after his return to Richmond he found himself in the midst of another Baptist gathering—the Baptist Congress. It was an organization composed of representative Baptist ministers and laymen from all sections of the North and South. He rejoiced in this commingling of the brethren of the North and South. One day, near the end of the meetings, he was preparing to take the car with his wife for home, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Yonder is a delegate whom I have not had to a meal—the only one I think that I have not had—I must have him" and across the street he hurried and secured the brother with his hospitable lasso.

He delivered at this Congress an address on Christian Science in which he described a prominent Baptist layman of Richmond

Digitized by Google

who had recently resorted to a Christian Science cure for his terrible stomach pains. Dr. Hatcher acted out the writhings of body and the groaning cries of the brother as he sought to remind himself that there was no such thing as a pain, or a stomach. "His speech" said the Herald "was overflowing with humorous allusions which repeatedly brought down the house." At the last service, he delivered the final message to the delegates. The Congress was held at his church. In a vein of pleasantry he said:

"Now brethren we have entertained you, but please understand that it was on condition that you remain over Sunday and fill our pulpits for us. The fact is your presence here this week has played havoc with our sermon making and you must come to the rescue." His valedictory words were, according to the Herald, "a characteristic speech, full of contagious humor and, at the conclusion, the congregation sang 'The Sweet By and By' and the parting hand was given."

These last words suggest another picture. He loved to sing "The Sweet By and By" at such farewell occasions. He would suggest the giving of the hand of fellowship to one another and then he would strike up the hymn "The Sweet By and By" beginning with the words "There's a land that is fairer than day;" whereupon there would be a general commingling around the pulpit and in the aisles as the delegates with songs on their lips and often with tears in their eyes would grasp the hand of one another and think of that fair land where congregations would ne'er break up and parting scenes be no more. A handshake with him, on such occasions, had in it rich meaning.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXV

1889

CHURCH DEDICATIONS. TAKING COLLECTIONS. CONVENTION AT MEMPHIS. INFLUENCE IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. THE CHESTERFIELD MEETING.

The year 1889 found him full of happiness:

"When I put my excellent health" he writes "my happy home, my lovely church and my many friends in a pile, I feel like having a thanksgiving day to celebrate the Lord's goodness to me—even me."

Concerning a young preacher for whom he lectured at his country church he writes:

"I am afraid he is not dead in earnest. He talks of small congregations as a thing which he can never help nor stand. He lacks snap and push and I tried to nerve him up to bold endeavor."

After writing of a good Baptist brother in Powhatan county losing his house by fire he says "I must help him so far as I can." I had taken the pastorate of three churches in Chesterfield county and he wrote me regarding my visiting the poor. "That is the way to work—it is not showy but it will bring good fruit. I expect you to have great revivals next Summer." He was busy with many burdens but not too busy to pick some humor along the way. He had a visitor at this time which put him on his mettle and furnished him material for the following jotting in the Baltimore Baptist:

Digitized by Google

"Triumphant for once. Yes, we actually beat a book man. He came to our house at first. We met him with a smile and said to him that we were incorrigible and wanted no book. He wanted us to understand that he would call again and seemed by a crafty twinkle in his eye to say that he would destroy us yet. We told him of our colossal cares and icily hinted that he would waste no time in trying to drive us into a bargain. He evidently did not believe us.

"His next call was at our study in the church. He came in the fresh of the morning, just as the flocks of golden gospel thought were fluttering through our brain and seemed ready to be couped for Sunday use. His dress was worthy of a lord and he had heard our sermon on the Sunday before and was mightily impressed. This softened us a trifle and made us think that he was a man of discriminating taste, but his wanton flushing of our golden-winged thoughts was not to be forgiven for next Sunday's sermon lay before us a mangled, not to say an unborn wreck and we had a grievance which no flattery as to our last Sunday's sermon could subdue. We were very frank to tell him that we were not 'at home' to him that day. He seemed in doubt as to our earnestness and began to swing around to an argument in favor of his book. We assumed a lurid air and he vanished.

"Calm as an Alpine sunset he sailed himself out saying that he would see us again. We hoped that he would have a lucid moment and change his mind but he did not. Book agents do not change their minds. They consider it their business to change other people's minds and he came again. By a happy chance we saw him as he passed the gate and came in. He did not see us. The outer door to our study was locked. He knocked,—reasonably at first, but by degrees he rattled the bolt, banged and jarred the door and looked as if he would rip up the foundations of things. We went back to a shady corner of our room and enjoyed the fury of the storm. Our ever-urbane sexton started down to open the door but we besought him to pity the sorrows of an impoverished middleaged man and go back to his sweeping. Long we sat mute and uneasy as to the final result but finally the roar and clatter ceased. We peered out of the window and saw that the coast was clear.

"Hail, happy day! The monster was gone and we were monarch of what little we surveyed. But we did not feel entirely safe and so we managed to be at home in fact as soon as we could reach it."

Digitized by Google

Dr. R. H. Hudnall says of him "He was known as the dedicator of churches in Virginia." From all manner of churches would come requests that he would dedicate their new building. He would generally find upon his arrival that a debt rested upon the new structure. He would also find the pastor and members looking expectantly to him to "lift the collection." It often happened, in the case of churches nearing completion, with a considerable debt still resting upon them, that some of them would suggest "If we can get Dr. Hatcher he will raise all we need". He appeared in one of his most striking roles when he was taking a collection on dedication day, with a congregation packing every nook and corner of the new building, peering through the windows and blocking the doors, and everybody in happy mood.

Let us picture a dedication scene. The day has arrived and the entire community seems to be crowding itself into the new building. Dr. Hatcher preaches the dedication sermon, at the close of which comes that event—so prodigiously important for the struggling church,—the collection. Already before the service, Dr. Hatcher has met some of the best givers in conference and they have promised to start the subscription at the proper moment. When the time for the collection comes, ushers are placed in the aisle, a financial statement is made and the amount named that is to be raised. Immediately one of the brethren gets up and says "Dr. Hatcher, I will give $—— towards paying off this debt" and, on his heels, comes another of those whom Dr. Hatcher has already enlisted, and thus the subscriptions are called out, either by the persons themselves, or by the ushers, and each subscription evokes some playful comment from Dr. Hatcher.

In speaking of one of his collections at a dedication he writes:

"That collection was after the order of Melchisedek, in the respect that it has no precedecessors in my experience. It was of the nature of a conflagration,—hard to keep under control. It was a fight to restrain the givers from making

Digitized by Google

such a conflict of noises as would make it impossible to get their names."

He dedicated a church in a Virginia town, and called the deacons together before the service saying to them "Brethren, you must start the collection today by your subscriptions and if you set the tune too low we will not be able to sing it through." When he walked upon the platform at a corner-stone laying he got the great audience in a good humor at the outset by looking over the crowd and saying, "where did all you people come from?" His cordial, informal manner put the audience at ease and in a cheerful frame. He insisted on the name of each giver being called out because his comments were suggested by the names. His humorous allusions were born of the moment and there was a spontaneous and a brightness, coupled with a reverence and seriousness, that made the service one of genuine worship.

On one occasion he stepped to the platform at the General Association to take up a collection. One or two men called out their subscriptions. He said to Dr. H. C. Smith, the clerk of the Association who was near him on the platform "write these subscriptions down, as they are called out." Dr. Smith who had failed to catch the name of the first subscriber called out to Dr. Hatcher who was asking for other subscriptions.

"Doctor, who was the first man?" Dr. Hatcher turned around as if in surprise looked at Dr. Smith and said "Adam."

He took up hundreds of collections, but he did not naturally like to do such work. He shrank from it. In his early ministry certain cases of need drove him to ask for an offering and he would engineer such ingatherings so skillfully and successfully that his fame as a collection taker spread and he was pressed into service on every hand. But he generally did it with inward protest and reluctance.

As an indication of his ability to remember names it may be mentioned that on a Sunday, in the latter part of March, he gave the right hand of fellowship to 90 new members. They

Digitized by Google

were stretched in a line at the front across the entire church and as he moved along the line he spoke a few words to each person, calling that person's name and his wife writes "He was as quick to remember and call names as ever-only having to ask names of three persons. Is it not remarkable." These 90 persons had come into his membership through the meetings which were still progressing at his church. He had in his congregation a family, by the name of Cousins, and in the family was a boy who had been living away from Richmond for a good while. He met Dr. Hatcher on the street one day, but did not expect the Doctor to remember him. He spoke in very cordial fashion with the youth who said to him, "Dr. Hatcher, you dont remember me, do you?" "Oh" said the Doctor "I never forget my cousins." He remembered names because he naturally took keen interest in people.

Never had his pastoral joys been higher than now. "Sunday was a great day at Grace Street" he writes. "Think of it,—779 in the Sunday School. House full, top and bottom, at our 11 o'clock service." In this same letter he gives a picture of one of those unpleasant little "tilts" that sometimes though very rarely, mar the intercourse of ministers when wrought up by their straining labors. This little stir quickly dissolved, showing that there was nothing permanent, or bitter in it.

"We had an unpleasant experience in the preachers' meeting yesterday. ——— preached at ——— Church Sunday morning and expressed a wish to come down and help me receive my new members. I sent my buggy up for him to come after he got through with the service. This offended ——— and he made complaints against us at the preachers' meeting. This led Dr. ——— to say some things that were very offensive to ——— and myself. We had a scene and I regretted it beyond measure. Not that I did any thing that I felt condemned for. X———. got very penitent and confessed that he acted unwisely. It is not good to write about and you can forget it. I think the fellows are so wrought up by the meeting that they are nervous. I am sure that it will soon pass away.

"But let not this give you a moment of worry. Do your own

Digitized by Google

work. Trust in the Lord and your revival will come. Do not hurt your voice by preaching too often."

It has been mentioned how on the previous Summer, while in England, he had visited the College of the Strict Baptists and had invited the president, Dr. Edward Parker, to attend the Southern Baptist Convention in the following May. That invitation was accepted. The Convention met in Memphis and its most memorable feature was the welcome service in honor of its English guest, Dr. Parker and his party. Dr. Hatcher, who presented them to the Convention, thus writes regarding the visit:

"In some respects the welcome of the deputation of the English brethren was the most thrilling incident of the meeting. After a brief introduction by this writer, Dr. Parker and Mr. Shaw both spoke. Their addresses were brief, frank and genuinely eloquent. Dr. Parker swept the crowd like a tempest and so great was the excitement when he closed that it was difficult to subdue the audience sufficiently to get a hearing for Dr. Broadus, who responded for the Convention and who made one of the most felicitous and brilliant speeches of his inimitable life."

Dr. Parker on Sunday morning was given the place of honor in being asked to preach at the morning service at the Church at which the Convention was being held and once again he captured his hearers by his discourse. Some one spoke of Dr. Hatcher as the "Warwick of the Convention", meaning that he was the maker of its presidents. But he claimed no such title and had no desire to play such a part. It is true that nearly all the presidents of the Convention who were elected during his connection with the Convention from this day forward were nominated by him, but he was always forced to the front by the friends of the nominee. He went to denominational gatherings with no personal axes to grind, though his own grindstone was kept unusually busy. Those states which had their candidates for office in the Convention fre-

Digitized by Google

quently seemed to think that if they could get Dr. Hatcher to champion their man it would be a great point gained and many were the appeals that were thus brought to him. Delegations from cities that were seeking the next Convention for their own city would solicit his championship of their cause. I do not wish to overstate it but it seems generally agreed that when the Convention was called to face critical issues, when important papers were to be drawn up and crucial decisions made by the Convention that to no one man was there a more general turning for leadership than to Dr. Hatcher. The feeling seemed to be that he was so devoid of personal schemes of his own in the Convention, and had such tact and wisdom and such large interest in the work of the Denomination that his judgment could be safely trusted.

"If asked to name the man who was the most effective single factor in the Southern Baptist Convention," says Dr. J. M. Frost. "I could name no one who would outrank William E. Hatcher of Virginia. His guiding genius was potent in many ways. Others might find time for leisure during its session or absent themselves from its meeting, but he made the business of the Convention his first business when in attendance on its meetings. It was his custom to choose a seat in easy reach of the presiding officer and there he could be found at every meeting and watching everything with intensest interest. It was a matter of conscience with him and in this he set a high example and rendered valuable service. In our great gatherings he will be sadly missed and many will wish for his presence and for his helpful words."

Dr. J. F. Love tells me that at one of the sessions of the Convention he greatly desired a resolution passed by the Convention that would help him meet a critical denominational issue in Arkansas where he was then Secretary of State Missions. It was an issue that affected also the Southern Baptist Convention and it was important that the Convention should at that meeting put itself in a wise attitude towards a certain constituency in Arkansas. He went to Judge Haralson, the president of the Convention, told him the situation, and said "And

Digitized by Google

now Judge, if I may suggest the man whom I would like for you to appoint as chairman of the committee, the man who would have to write the paper to be adopted by the Convention, I want to ask that you appoint Dr. Hatcher. We need a man of singular wisdom and level headedness to draw up such a document and I think Dr. Hatcher is the man."

Dr. Hatcher was appointed to prepare the paper and with many other people and tasks pulling at him at that Convention he wrote the paper which was adopted by the Convention and which, Dr. Love says, helped to save the day in Arkansas.

This incident occured at a later Convention but is mentioned here as showing his influence in the Convention. It was at this Memphis Convention that a new President of the Convention was to be elected and the friends of Judge Haralson of Alabama had asked Dr. Hatcher to place the Judge's name in nomination. Dr. Hatcher had two warm personal friends,—one of these Judge Haralson and the other a distinguished layman in another Southern state, Col———— and the friends of this latter gentleman had also asked Dr. Hatcher to champion the cause of their man for the presidency of the Convention in Memphis. He was in a quandary but was soon relieved by a letter from the latter friend releasing him from any obligation to present his name and giving way to the other gentleman. He presented Judge Haralson's name to the Convention and it was generally agreed that it was his speech that won him the nomination. A noble spirit was Judge Haralson. For many years the Convention insisted on his wearing the presidential honor and with gentleness, courtesy and firmness he wielded the gavel and through it all he clung to Dr. Hatcher with affectionate dependence, not in any cringing, or helpless way, for he was a master in his direction of the exercises, but I would often hear him say, as he would walk arm in arm with him, "Hatcher, you must keep near me, to help me." They loved each other and were close counselors about denominational matters.

During this Convention he presented a resolution which precipitated a discussion. The debate became animated and

Digitized by Google

several entered the fray. Rev. Dr. ——— arose to oppose the resolution and plunged into an earnest speech, talking however in somewhat rambling fashion. At a certain point in his remarks he swung from his track, following another line of thought. When he sought to return from his side remarks to the main line of his speech he could not find the track. He stopped abruptly, looked around in a bewildered way, and in high tones called out:

"Where was I before I was interrupted?"

"I think you were back in the dark ages" ventured Dr. Hatcher.

The explosion of laughter that followed well nigh shook the rafters. The remark could hardly be entered in the list of "kind words" to an opponent and yet it was not made with any malice afore-thought and, as for the audience that had been overstrained by the excited debate,—it jolted them into a restful good humor. At another time in the Convention the tide of the discussion was running high. Some of the big guns were in the field, the firing commenced and a battle seemed imminent. Dr. Hatcher stepped into the breach,—but let Rev. Harry Bagby tell the story:

"My first view of Dr. Hatcher was to me very impressive. It was at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, in Memphis, in 1889. The Convention had under consideration the report on Missions in Papal fields. Dr. A. C. Dixon, at that time pastor in the city of Baltimore, delivered an address in which he undertook to lay bare the heresies, the corruption and the dangers of Romanism in America. His phillipic would have done credit to Demosthenes in his prime. He cried aloud and spared not. He was followed by Dr. Henry McDonald who was born and bred a Roman Catholic. He admitted the truthfulness of what Dr. Dixon had said, but declared it to be his conviction that it was unwise to attack Romanism in that way in America. He then described a visit to his old home in Ireland. He told of meeting his Roman Catholic brother whom he had not seen for forty years. He described how they went together into the garden, and knelt at their sainted mother's grave and prayed together, protestant on

Digitized by Google

one side and the Roman Catholic on the other. He melted the audience to tears, and Dr. Dixon was knocked out with one blow. Everybody saw it would be very unfortunate to engage in a heated discussion on that subject at such a time and in such a place. As Dr. McDonald closed, Dr. Hatcher got the floor. I have never heard a brighter speech than that which followed in the next five minutes. Among other things he said, 'My brethren we are living in the most marvelous age in all the world's history. We have heard on this platform in one hour the fiery Martin Luther and the gentle Phillip Melancthon. We have heard this afternoon from the two Johns. One said 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come'; the other said 'My little children a new commandment I write unto you, that you love one another.' And now it seems to me brethren that it is a good time to stop.' The effect was elastic, the incident left every one smiling and happy."

In a few days he was back in Virginia busy with his tasks and travels. He had prepared, since his return from his European journeys, two new lectures, one on "Spurgeon and His Work" and the other on "Crossing the Sea", and on those two topics he lectured in nearly every section of Virginia. He delivered in one of the lower counties of the state his lecture on Spurgeon. After the lecture he was walking around the church building when an old fellow with a grinning face and a draggy manner of speech walked up to him and, in a confidential tone, drawled out:

"Say, Dr. Hatcher; that man Spurg—I think you said that was his name—I say that man Spurg must have been a right nice man." The lecturer's reply is not on record but it is considered extremely probable that he cherished very much the same opinion as his smiling brother. The following letter of May 24th will give an idea of his busy manner of life.

"My Dear E:

"I went to Fredericksburg, Monday. I had a church to dedicate Tuesday and on Tuesday night I had a great crowd to hear my "Spurgeon and his work" at Dr. Dunaway's church. I have not been well since I got home. I go this afternoon to

Digitized by Google

meet committee on Dr. Winfree's monument. How I wish that I could see you there. I am anticipating my time with you next week. . . Monday I go to Suffolk and will not get back until Wednesday."

The letter refers to "Dr. Winfree's monument." Dr. Winfree was an honored pastor in Chesterfield County and a distinguished preacher and Dr. Hatcher had promised to help the Chesterfield people in their movement for a monument to their late pastor. Dr. Wright of Suffolk, in writing about the lecture on Spurgeon delivered at his church, says:

"The house was literally packed and the crowds stood outside at the windows and doors unable to get in. At the close of the lecture, and before the audience knew what he was about, the Doctor began a skillful onslaught upon the assembled crowd in the interest of the building fund of our new church and in a short time secured nearly $1200. He has our profound gratitude for his successful management of this entire matter."

At the Dover Association he arose to speak and Dr. L——— called out: "If Dr. Hatcher is going to discuss the Kind Words publication then I make the point of order that he is out of order."

"Brother Moderator" replied Dr. Hatcher "I am puzzled to know how Dr. L——— has found out what my speech is going to be. I am willing to submit to the judgment of the moderator whether a point of order, raised against a speech which has not been made, is a valid point or not." The moderator ruled that it was not and Dr. Hatcher made it plain that he had not arisen for the purpose indicated in brother L———'s point of order.

It was during this Summer that a new fountain of pleasure was opened to him from which he drank to his soul's refreshment to the end of his life. This fountain was "Chesterfield,"—a county lying on the opposite of the James River from Richmond. I was pastor of three country churches in that county, and his visits to me during my residence in the county

Digitized by Google

linked him with the churches and people in that section in a way that gave them a place in his heart that was never lost and that made Chesterfield a sacred tramping ground for him. He came to speak of it in his letters to me as "the sacred soil" and oftimes in telling of his drives across the river he would speak of having "struck for the sacred hills." He helped me in meetings at two of my churches, being prevented from being with me at the Tomahawk church of which his grandfather, Jeremiah Hatcher had once been pastor.

At my Skinquarter church his opening sermon was on "Christ knocking at the door of the church" and at the conclusion of the sermon the congregation was overcome with emotion, and the deacon who attempted to lead in prayer broke down and sobbed and yet he himself remained calm; he did not allow himself to be swept away by the storm of feeling which his own sermon had created, but held himself in hand that he might direct the forces in the meeting. It was as if he had said "Express your feelings, if you are so moved to do, but understand this is not the revival; we are just beginning; and there is much yet to be done." The meeting proved to be a glorious one, but it was at Bethlehem church that he had his crowning experience. He led the singing, taught the congregation new songs; they responded to his every touch and his soul reveled in it all. The meeting had in it some wonderful incidents which left their echoes singing in his soul during all his remaining years.

He had his buggy with hiim and he and I would drive each night to a new home. One night we drew up at old Mr. Lybargers,—and a crustier and odder old character it would be hard to find, and yet that night, as my father began to dig into him, he found a gold mine of interesting qualities. I had warned him before-hand that he would find the old man a bundle of inconsistences. He thus wrote about his visit:

"I can testify that the old gentleman lived up to his recommendations that night. His English was badly shattered, but he was quick of mind, brimming with humor, sarcastic, defiant

Digitized by Google

and skeptical. As soon as supper was over, he opened fire. He slashed the preachers, plucked the churches and sneered revivals out of countenance. I think I never heard any man make a more clever, or damaging, assault upon religion as embodied in individuals and churches of that day. Much that he said was true and so intermixed with what was not true that it was hard to handle him. Indeed I gave him full rein and expressed approval of many things that he said. He ran riot with invective and seemed for awhile intoxicated with the sense of victory."

Mrs. Lybarger and I sat by keenly interested as spectators. They had it hard and long. The old man got our horse next morning, fighting all the time against the suggestion of his going to church. We drove out to Bethlehem, started the meetings for the day and one of its many happy features was the presence and the conversion of the old man, and the letters from my father in later years were destined to tell me of many drives he had had up to "Brother Lybarger's". My father loved to keep in touch with his old friend and to put whatever light he could upon his christian pathway. The meetings were rich in fruit. At one of the homes where we were spending the night it seemed to him, after we had retired, that I was restless and worried about something and he called out to me from his bed, in solicitous tones, saying; "My boy, do you feel that I am taking too much of the meeting out of your hands?" It took me not a second of time to banish any such delusion from his mind.

He loved to tell of the conversion in that Bethlehem meeting of old Brother Orrell, over 90 years of age and of a little boy of tender age. When they were received for baptism they were together and Dr. Hatcher made touching reference to the aged man and the little lad coming into the kingdom side by side. On the day of the baptism, with the crowds lining the banks of the stream they carried the old man into the water side by side with the boy. He was baptized first and as they started to carry him out of the water he stopped them, saying; "Oh I must wait for my little friend" and there

Digitized by Google

he remained until the boy was baptized and together they went out of the water. Not very long after that Dr. Hatcher went to Bethlehem to preach the funeral of this old man. At a certain point in the service he told the story of the old man and his little friend ———— and then looking out over the throng of people he said "What has become of that boy?" "Here he is" came the answer and Dr. Hatcher learned to his joy that the boy was developing into an active, useful member of the church.

On November, 3rd, he wrote me at the Louisville Seminary:

"DEAR ELDRIDGE:

"Here it is again. I am in Richmond and at my desk on Sunday night writing to you. If we live I suppose this will be the first of an enormous mass of letters that will go to you from my pen for the next three years. But I cannot quite promise to write every Sunday night but I will give you the best I can.

"Dr. ———— was to begin a series of 'Family Homilies' tonight. His first theme was 'Winning a wife'. Lizzie had to remark that he had won so many wives that she supposed he felt specially prepared to tell how it ought to be done."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI

1889-1891

TRIPS TO CHESTERFIELD. PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF CHURCH TROUBLES. EDITORIAL CRITICISMS. NEW BUILDING. INTEREST IN PLAIN PEOPLE. PUTTING HONOR UPON OTHERS. KINDNESS TO YOUNG PREACHERS.

One result of the Bethlehem meetings was the beginning of one of the dearest friendships of his life. A young preacher, Rev. Robert H Winfree, had his pastoral field in the same part of the county as mine and a little nearer to Richmond. He felt singularly drawn to this young preacher from the start and called him sometimes "Bob" and sometimes "Robert". Dr. Hatcher was ardent in his attachments, not only to his personal friends, but also to communities. There was something in his soul that cried out for fellowship with those he had come to love and sometimes even for places like Bedford and Chesterfield that had become endeared to him by sacred experiences. At first he shrank from going back over the Chesterfield roads which we had traveled in our meetings. He wrote me "I confess it puts a lonely feeling upon me to cross the bridge and head towards old Chesterfield. You have spoiled that country for me as I will hate to run the old roads without having you along." But the yearning for the old roads and the people soon returned and more and more the home of his friend, Robert Winfree, became a beloved place to him. In fact Chesterfield became his recreation annex for the next few years and what his croquet games formerly did for him at the College was now done for him by his Chesterfield trips. He could jump in his buggy, and in a few minutes

Digitized by Google

be on the other side of the river and scuddying through Manchester and out along the Midlothian turnpike. Not only did his buggy generally carry some little trinkets, or sweets, as he drove up to one of the Chesterfield homes, but he was fertile in expedients for ministering to the people. After a heavy strain of toil in the city it meant a rejuvenation to him to jump in his buggy, take a boy, or a preacher, with him, and go "careering" out over the hills into the "sacred country."

In a letter to me, at this time, he writes regarding Dr. Whitfield, one of the Richmond pastors; "He is dear to me—in fact I hold him first among the pastors in Richmond. He is so true and wise." He yearned for just such companionships. They gave him a refreshing relaxation from his pastoral and denominational strains. Many were the times that Dr. Theodore Whitfield and he climbed the Chesterfield hills and spent the night at "Robert's", or at some other Chesterfield home. The next letter draws a picture of one of his visits, which letter he knew I would keenly enjoy.

"My Dear Eldridge:

"I begin early this time and hope to give you a very juicy topic by the time it is finished. Robert Winfree was ordained today Tuesday at Bethel. Dr. Whitfield and I went up and spent Monday night at Baker's. Bagby was there and we spent a delightful evening together. We had a fine day for the ordination. Bob bore himself quite handsomely in the examination. I conducted the examination and did not put it very severely for him. The congregation was excellent and the sermon seemed to make an excellent impression. "Brudder Joe" was there and he looked uncommonly well. Dr. Hancock was there and Frank with him. My heart is burdened for Frank; he is a fine boy and capable of great things. . . Write him if you have a spare moment."

"On Dec. 15th, he wrote:

"My Dear E:.

"We had a big memorial service in honor of Jeff Davis on last Wednesday. It was held at Second Baptist Church and the crowd was overflowing. Drs. ——— and ——— spoke

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

and did it well. I had to preside and made a brief speech which was said to be good. It was a modest blushing kind of performance which fairly veiled its face before the glare of G————'s rhetoric, and the measured roll of L————'s voice. Dr.———— was asked to be the orator of the occasion but declined. He was much criticized and many said that he could not praise Davis lest he should. . . As I did not know why he did not speak, I could say nothing on the subject."

The time seemed ripe for him to strike for a new church building. For fourteen years he had labored with increasing congregations in the old structure, the church relieving itself on two or three occasions by sending out colonies to establish new churches.

On Sunday morning during the Christmas season Dr. Hatcher startled his congregation by making the surprising announcement:

"On New Year's Day I expect to celebrate at my home the 25th anniversary of my marriage and I give a hearty invitation to every one of you to be present and I ask each of you to bring me a silver present". His wife said she caught her breath at this last remark saying to herself "What can he mean? I never heard him make such a statement before; but he kept us in suspense for only a second and he added 'to be used in building the church. I want $12,000.' "

He trod the heights on that New Year's day at his Reception as he and his wife greeted the throngs of members and friends that crowded into his home during the afternoon and evening. Among those who came were the Baptists pastors, who presented to him an "exquisitely beautiful and costly silver present." But the out-standing feature of the Reception was the report of the deacons near the close of the day announcing that $12,000, the amount asked for,—had been raised during the day. In such financial campaigns he always gave largely. His wife says she thinks that he gave $1,000 towards the new building. Whenever any one would chide him for what often seemed reckless giving on his part he would reply "I

Digitized by Google

must give because the Lord gives to me" and he might possibly have added with equal truthfulness that the Lord gave so abundantly to him because he gave so freely to his cause. It might be mentioned that his frequent practice of taking up collections for others put a drain, not only on his vocal powers, but often on his own purse.

He had an interesting experience at this time in Washington where, in conjunction with Dr. George C. Lorimer, he preached at the dedication of the First Baptist Church of that city. Dr. Lorimer preached an eloquent sermon in the morning, but a large part of his audience went out after the sermon, not waiting for the collection. Dr. Hatcher preached at night and after his sermon made some complimentary allusion to his audience, whereupon Dr. Lorimer broke in with the remark:

"No man ever had a finer set of hearers than I had at this morning's service." To which Dr. Hatcher replied:

"I can safely say that my audience will never forsake me as ingloriously as yours did this morning. If it should, I think I would go out and hang myself."

"The audience broke into happy laughter" said Dr. Hatcher "and went quite beyond the morning audience in its contribution to the church fund."

It was a curious experience which he had. He was very sick during the day and yet when he arose to preach at night his ailment fled. "Sunday I suffered intensely from nausea" he wrote "and yet I do not remember that I ever enjoyed preaching more in my life." After the service his sickness returned, pursued him to the hotel and rolled him in delirium during the night. Upon his return to Richmond he addressed himself to his campaign for his new building, but troubles lay ahead of him. "Your father is afraid that X———— and his party will defeat it" writes my mother referring to the church building enterprise.

"There is evidently a counter current against us" he writes me, "and it sometimes makes me nervous but my trust is in the Lord. If we are not to have a new church I can submit but I hope it will come."

Digitized by Google

These were stressful days for him. "I find myself badly used up by my varied cares" he writes "and am trying to lighten my burdens. It is hard to endure such a strain." How fortunate it was that in times of strain he could exchange his burdens for a bright visit to one of his Chesterfield homes. He draws a vivid picture of such an outing.

"On Friday afternoon I jumped into my buggy, picked up Woodie and hied us forth for the sacred hills of Chesterfield. I took the River road and landed about sunset at Carey Winston's. Carey was ploughing in the field in front of the house and saw me coming and he yelled out a joyful welcome. They saw me from the house and by the time I got out of the buggy and got into the house they had a roaring fire ready for me. Mrs. Carey Winston had toothache; she was suffering intensely, but she got better. The night was like an elysian dream. How glad they seemed to be. They thanked me for coming, as if I had done them a great service. We had hours of fine talk. They gave me a lovely room to sleep in. It was really delicious to hear them talk so hopefully and affectionately about their church."

At last the climax came. For many years there had been a factional element in the church that caused trouble. A few years before this time, however, those who had opposed him had laid down their arms and in many ways had cooperated with him since that time; but the sea had not been perfectly calm and there had been strains and breaks in the membership. But at a meeting of the church at this time the end came, these particular members and others with them withdrawing from the church. On the next morning my father writes me: "The agony is over. Last night was a dismal rainy time, but the ends of the earth came to church. I had my fears for I knew that there had been some bad talking." He then describes the manner in which letters were asked for for about 30 of the members—among them those who had given him trouble at intervals during his pastorate. The request for the letters was granted. "It was a peaceful solution of an old trouble" he said. "It may leave some sores and we may lose a few more but Grace Street will go marching on. The Lord is with us."

Digitized by Google

"Great events in the history of Grace Street have transpired since I last wrote you" writes my mother. "We have passed through a season of trials, anxiety and partial excitement. . . I feel however, that, as severe as the ordeal is, it is best for us and the church at last. Your father is full of faith and courage and thinks there is a brighter day coming for old Grace Street."

The story of the factional troubles in his church are told in these pages with no desire whatever to reopen any old wounds, or to make any unkind flings at any one.

Not one trace of bitterness remained in my father's heart towards those who opposed him. He and they in the after years, while connected with different churches, mingled in christian fraternity and co-operated freely in religious work. It seems to have been a case where certain persons for some reason did not work in harmony with the pastor and the rest of the church and so they went into other churches where they felt they could be happier. There were others who thought it best to go with them. If those who went out felt a relief, this feeling was also shared by pastor and church and the general sentiment was that the action taken was a fortunate culmination of a long growing trouble. It gave the church a jar which some thought meant that the day of doom had come and yet as the church closed up the ranks it found itself gathered into a compact unit such as it had never been before.

Someone asked him for his advice in preparing a set of rules for the government of his church membership. He thus replied:

"Our advice is to conjure up a whole lot of rules,—say forty or forty five—to write them neatly on half sheets of foolscap (writing only on one side) making them touch all subjects such as dancing, Sunday excursion, drinking, cooking on the Lord's Day, attending church meetings, strifes among brethren, stealing, cheating, going in debt, and very many other things, too numerous to mention at this time and then to put the document in a large white envelope and neatly to drop it into a roaring wood fire allowing it to remain, say, for a couple of hours and then to take it out and present what is left to the church."

Digitized by Google

"In the splendid home of this good and great man it was my pleasure to rest for several days" writes Rev. J. A. Leslie. "The wonder is how Dr. and Mrs. Hatcher find time to do such great things for the Lord in so many different ways and places."

He set his heart upon having a splend d church edifice, a building adequate for large denominational gatherings, as well as for his own church services.

As a rule he had only kind words for his brother ministers, but there were times when he would let fly his arrows of criticism. He wrote an article for a Baptist weekly that produced a commotión. In this communciation he attacked the practice of certain ministers becoming mixed up with "land booms" and sent the article to the editor. The article seemed so severe that the editor became panic stricken about it and wrote the following letter:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER:

"Prepare to fight! My, my; if you havn't a first class row on hand now, then there is no fight in the "C————" men or in the C———— of F————.

"Why those expressions of No. 5 in your 'High Places' are perfectly awful. W———— in reading the proof called Mrs. Hatcher's [who was visiting in the editor's city at that time] attention to them. When I came to the office, I ran up to see the good wife and to ask her to strike out the heart of that paragraph.

"But she had flown down the street. So I returned and said to the printer, 'I'll seek a bomb proof, so put in the initials 'W. E. H.' But, my; wont the shot rattle on our roof soon. I'll fly the white flag and cry 'On to Richmond'. You began this row and you must fight it out, if it takes all Summer. If your foes leave a few remnants of your body, I'll try to do you a service by gathering them together and having a respectable funeral.

"But seriously you were awful. You must have felt in a savage humor when you wrote those paragraphs."

The editor was correct. The shot did begin to rattle. A very prominent minister in another state felt that the article

Digitized by Google

was aimed at him and he indignantly informed Dr. Hatcher that he was coming to Richmond for a settlement.

A "council" of four ministers was called, two of them representing Dr. Hatcher and the other two representing the aggrieved minister, who came to Richmond for the meeting. The six brethren came together and the brother charged that Dr. Hatcher had done him a public wrong in the aforesaid article and demanded that the matter be set right. In writing me about the council he says that the indignant minister "took an hour, or more, in explaining his connection with the X———— Land Booms which had no connection with our quarrel. I told them my article was not designed to injure anybody but to correct a growing evil among preachers,—that if any had been wounded by my editorial, it was simply because they had put themselves in the way of my fire. The Committee said that my explanation was satisfactory and would not recommend that any public statement as to the affair should be made, unless Dr. X———— wished it and I was willing.

"As a simple fact, I was not hitting X————. I told him that I could not forget, while writing the article, his record on the Land Boom business, but it was no wish of mine to hurt him. I only was anxious that he should not hurt anybody else. Thus it ended. A small and transient sensation."

While his editorial pen dropped kindness in nearly every paragraph, yet he had in him the critical element, and he was unsparing in his denunciations when occasion called for it. He sought to correct faults, not simply in his children, but in boys and young preachers. He opened fire in his paper against the practice of some preachers in that day of delivering little "Preludes" before their regular sermons. He scored those evangelists who were in a habit when beginning a meeting in a town of whipping the town into a tempest by denunciations of absent officials and by other such sensational methods.

He had a niece to whom he was much attached. He said to her one day:

"You must watch your tongue, Bettie; you will hurt more people with it than you help, if you dont mind," to which she somewhat bluntly replied:

Digitized by Google

"Well, Uncle William; how about your watching your pen?" She knew that he was very free in expressing himself in the public press regarding the things he did not like. During his connection with the Herald he reprimanded a Virginia Bishop for declaring, in a heated manner in a public gathering, that he would not be "bullied or baited" by any one. Dr. Hatcher felt that such public words by such a prominent church official were improper and so—to the dismay of many—he opened fire.

He was present at a conference in Richmond of certain Baptist ministers and laymen. He was a young pastor then and in the conference was a Richmond layman, venerable and imposing in appearance and one of the richest if not the richest Baptist in the state, a man held in high respect by all and in the conference his word was practically law. No one seemed disposed to dispute his sway. His tone must have bordered on the omniscient—at any rate young Mr. Hatcher thought so and when at a certain point in the discussion old brother T———— said with a sort of dogmatic drawl, "Well, I did not know that" the young preacher could restrain himself no longer and he said in a most impressive way "brethren, brother T———— states that he did not know that and it goes to prove that there is one thing in the world that brother T———— did not know." The old gentleman felt a jolt and maybe had one or two thoughts that were not recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

His church had decided to erect a large and magnificient structure. A temporary tabernacle was built in which to hold the services during the construction of the new building. Regarding his old church, which was now being taken to pieces, he writes:

"As a ruin it has a pathetic and sorrowful look and it makes me faint of soul to go by it, though my sickness of spirit may spring, in part, from the burden of building the new house."

He took active interest in the establishment of a Baptist

Digitized by Google

Orphanage for the state, was appointed as chairman of a committee of the General Association to select a location for the institution and went twice with the committee on a tour of inspection of certain towns in the state. In one of his letters he says, "I have breakfast in the morning for Felix and Dixon." This sentence points to a favorite custom with him,—that of having "breakfasts" for his ministerial visitors. Dr. Landrum, in a public discourse once spoke of "Breakfasts at Dr. Hatcher's" as one of the happy social events in the life of the Richmond pastors.

During the Summer he spent his vacation among the country churches. At the James River Association it was said, "Dr. Hatcher was never in better trim. He preached with more than usual power and unction," and a correspondent from Jeffersonton where he held a week's meetings writes, "How we were all drawn to Dr. Hatcher, the prince of Southern preachers."

After attending the Middle District Association, he writes me on Aug. 8th:

"X———— preached the sermon and it was not well received. It was very censorious, cold and pessimistic. He has evidently been in trouble and lost faith in humanity. I think that I will write to him and try to cheer him up. . . I called out Dudley Rudd and he made a clear and sensible statement as to his work at Powhatan station. We then got a collection for him, amounting to $127. He was wonderfully set up. I am to preach for him next Sunday afternoon. Today I am crushed with manifold work and must cut short my letter."

His Summer travels, included Brooklyn and Saratoga N. Y. With his return to Richmond he grappled in vigorous fashion his building campaign. The following letter of Oct. 4th, gives us a peep behind the scenes:

"My Dear Eldridge:

"Today has been glorious and I celebrated it with a game of croquet. This has been an anxious week with me. We had $3,000 to raise and Foster was sick. But the brethren got their

Digitized by Google

blood up and the money came in. I put in $100 and that rather put my blood somewhat down; but I am in for the war and am going to put in my 'blood and treasure'. . . I got blue one day,—just for an hour and I was very blue, but I soon got back to my standing ground that the Lord was in the movement and will carry us through. . . I went around to see my beloved brother Gates last night. What a comfort he is to me. He told me a bit of news. He says that X———— is not happy at ———— church. . . . I am not specially interested in his coming back. I would not move my finger to bring him back as a matter of triumph over that faction. I scorn to dip as low as that. I am seeking to elevate the tone of my church and I think it will come. My people seem happy and united.

"*Sunday night.* . . My people seem to think my sermons were above average, but I am sore because of my lack of spiritual power. I must see the people coming to Christ."

It was a marked characteristic of his to take interest in the plain people about him,—in fact in people of all classes. He might be buying candy from a confectioner, or having his shoes shined or buying a newspaper;—whatever the simple transaction might be, he treated the person with whom he was dealing as a neighbor—yea, as a brother and he generally fell into an interesting colloquy with him. "Nothing that is human was alien to him" writes Dr. Dodd. "He had the eye which singles out worth everywhere." He often saw in people what superficial observers failed to see and his stories of striking characters whom he had met were due to his discovering and eliciting the finer traits in plain people. Concerning his old barber, he wrote me on Oct. 12th:

"My old Barber Hobson died Friday. It was a real grief to me for he was a good man and one of my most ardent friends. It was always a pleasant experience to hear him talk. He was a Baptist deacon and uncommonly intelligent. He was a reader of the Baltimore Baptist and always had pithy remarks to make on my productions. I was sorry that I could not go to his funeral."

These were busy days with him. His church was to hold a Bazaar, and he wrote that the "Boys Table" would "have a

Digitized by Google

mountain of things.. . . I had a fine game of croquet this afternoon and won three games. I had my same pale-eyed D———— for my partner.

"*Saturday morning.* I am much interested in your editorial work. Seek to purify your style and begin to use your imagination. Right often you must draw elaborate word-pictures. Do not be afraid of being florid and sophomoric. If your imagination is truthful, it cannot be too lofty in its flights. The world is sluggish and needs to be pleased with pictures."

This paragraph gives a peep into his own literary workshop. His popularity as a writer was largely due to the fact that he would in imagination see what he was writing, and, thus with the idea before his gaze he would merely draw it for the reader,—he would paint it. He knew how to use his colors and it was for this reason that his greatest sermons were his character sermons. In them he became the portrait painter. It might be mentioned here that it was his rule never—or with rare exceptions—to use the "underscore" in his writings.

In November the General Association met in Richmond. "The Association seems rather dull" writes my mother. "Your father got up some jollity tonight in taking a collection for two churches. Folks are coming in and I must stop."

He had a constitutional grudge against dull meetings. It may seem an odd method which he employed for breaking up the dulness in the above Association,—that of "taking a collection for two churches." But therein seemed to lie his art. The fact probably was that those two churches had been pleading with him during the meeting to champion their cause before the Association and—when the exercises had grown tiresome—he finally yielded to their importunities.

In such cases he would arise, as if he was seeking the protection of the Association and say something like this:

"Brother Moderator, I have a pastor, and some of his men, here at my heels and I am thinking of moving the appointment of a committee of lunacy to examine them. They have the impudence to imagine that because they have no church

Digitized by Google

building in which to worship, and very little money with which to build them one, that somebody in this Association might be willing to help them. I have sought to cure them of their insanity but their case grows worse. "Whom are you talking about?" some one would call out. "I can't tell you" would reply Dr. Hatcher "because they might want a collection." "Why can't we help them?" would call out another and in a few moments the delegates would be insisting on helping "that struggling church," the shining coin and the greenbacks would be flocking in and Dr. Hatcher would be called to the front to direct the little whirlwind which he had started.

"DEAR E: "AT RUEGER'S, Monday 2 P. M.

"Here are Pitt, Whitfield and I. We are here for oysters. I send this to say that I met Haddon Watkins just now and he told me that the Skinquarter church [in Chesterfield] was burned yesterday. It is sad news I have no details."

"Yours, Wm. E. Hatcher."

"RICHMOND VA., Jan. 4th, 1891.

"MY DEAR E,—I am very sorry for the Skinquarter people. I am conjuring some little scheme to pull them out of the mire. Not much can I do, but, in some way, or another, I may give them a lift.

"They have had a protracted meeting at the College" he writes, "but it has not come to much. It was conducted by a ———— evangelist. I heard him once and was well pleased—except that he was decidedly too gushy. They seemed to me to be worrying the boys to 'confess', when really they were not convicted."

"RICHMOND, Feby., 15th, 1891.

"MY DEAR E,—I am just from church. Boys Anniversary boomed—big crowd and fine speeches from Sleight and Dr. Newton. We got $103.81—good wasn't it? The boys sang splendidly. It was a great success.

"I have not had a word from the fairy land of Chesterfield for some weeks. I think that even your intoxicated fancy would not be enchanted by a proposed drive up the turnpike this time. But we can wait and hope for better days.

Digitized by Google

Concerning his little nephew who was then living in our home he writes:

"Junius bloomed out in his long breeches yesterday and is so proud that it is believed that if he were to meet the angel Gabriel on the road he would ask him instantly what he thought of his breeches."

Two or three weeks later he writes:

"Junius has regaled us this week with a capacious case of mumps. His jaws have been spread like great banners and the sight of him has been a comedy. He has stood the fire of our fun and ridicule quite serenely and is now nearly well again."

The latter part of March he undertook a revival campaign in the tabernacle, with Dr. J. S. Felix assisting him. He had recently aided Dr. Felix in meetings at his Lynchburg Church.

"Your father and Dr. Felix, have just started in the rain to dinner at Ford's hotel" writes my mother. "Before starting, your father gave Dr. Felix some account of his stay in England—said that if he were a young man he would go over there and help the regular Baptists. . . He gave him at breakfast a picture of the Richmond pastors as he first knew them; Burrows, at the First, took a notion to wear a gown a little while. Dr. Howell at 2nd wore a larger cloak, or toga, thrown over his shoulders."

He writes: "Monday morning. I am now grappling with the question as to how we are to get $15,000 in cash during the Spring. The Lord must show me how."

It was no mere form of speech with him when he spoke of his dependence on God for aid in his work. He loved men but he leaned on God.

"Richmond, Va., March, 23rd, 1891.

"My Dear E,—Edith is evidently better. . . She is as radiant as a princess. . . Kate is here and we have just closed a quarrel on matrimony. I tell her not to marry any man whom she can not obey and she says that she will respect, but she will not obey the man she marries. She reports an immense time in N. C."

Digitized by Google

"My building work lies heavily upon me. We will need $15,000 by the end of May. I get dazed at times and yet I am sure that my people will realize the situation."

He showed a great kindness to an old man, not a member of his church. His son, not a Baptist, sent him a note and a handsome chair, asking him to accept it as a token of grateful esteem.

"It touched me deeply" writes my father "So many think I slight them that I rejoice when one comes back."

"To-morrow morning the Felixes and other preachers are to be here to breakfast," writes my mother, on March 19th, and on April 15th, she writes concerning a young man whom he took in his home and sought to help:

"Your father brought in a young man from Germany,—who has lived several years in this country, who wants to study for the ministry. . . He came here looking for work and has not been successful yet. He is surely a bright and interesting fellow. The girls are highly entertained by him. . . . Two other young men have been here recently looking for situations,—both from North Carolina.

"Your father has not improved his physical condition since I last wrote. . . He has gone to the College for a game this afternoon. . . The bell has kept up an incessant ringing while I have been writing—must stop now and see who is the last and what his demands are."

To his daughter Orie he writes on May 5th a letter thanking her for a "beautiful present" which she has sent him and concluding as follows:

"I am sorry I cannot return you a poetic response to your fine lines which accompany your gift. The Muses have never been in the least friendly to me and I know that I could not woo them in my present mood."

His love for poetry seemed small. In his early life he was fond of it, but this fondness seemed to diminish rather than increase and during the larger part of his ministry he rarely read,

Digitized by Google

or quoted poetry. He said in his later life "I like poetry but I never quoted it, because it would never stick in my memory."

In this connection it may be mentioned that a lady on one occasion spoke of the resemblance between Dr. Hatcher and Browning and when asked to state the points of resemblance she gave the following:

Love of people.
Deep interest in human nature.
Optimism.
A fighter.
Love of Reality—contempt of sham.
Healthy-mindedness.
Greatly beloved by others
Vivid anticipation of the other world
Desire for sudden death.

He often sought to put honor upon his brethren in denominational gatherings, by suggesting to the presiding officer to call out these brethren and lay certain public tasks upon them. It would be interesting to know how many of those who, in the Southern Baptist Convention, were called upon to respond to the Address of Welcome, were suggested beforehand to the President by Dr. Hatcher. Not that there was any agreement about this from year to year nor that any of the presiding officers felt under any obligation whatever to look to Dr. Hatcher for this. But it came to pass that almost each year, for many years, he would suggest a brother for that purpose—writing to the President days or weeks before the meeting of the Convention. He loved to encourage his younger brethren. He delighted to stimulate them to larger things and in different ways he would bring them to the front. The following letter from Judge Haralson, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, cites a case in point which occured at the meeting in Birmingham, which Dr. Hatcher was prevented, by sickness, from attending:

"SELMA, ALA., May, 14th, 1891.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,—We all deplored your absence but the cause was well understood.

Digitized by Google

"I wanted to see you and talk over my incumbency, or the length of it. You know what you said to me at Memphis, I am not greedy. Sometime, or other, I want to confer with you about it and was specially anxious to have you for a room mate at the Florence that we might talk the stars out about a thousand things.

"Your old friend Pritchard was there, and bright and cheery as ever. In a good crowd, I told that when you and he were crossing the Alps and had to spend the night on its glorious summits you missed him and when you came to look him up, found that he had rigged up a guide and his dog and gone coon hunting.

"Acting on your admirable suggestion (a relief to me) I topped D———— up and he replied [to the address of welcome]. I'll say he did it nobly.

"Faithfully and Affectionately
"Jon' Haralson."

He was still writing for the Baltimore Baptist, and as an example of the sunlight which his newspaper jottings often put into other lives may be mentioned the case of a minister who had recently come from another state to the pastorate of the First church in one of the Virginia cities. Dr. Hatcher wrote an item about his visit in the home of the new pastor and received a letter from him saying: "This morning, we opened the mail together. There were sad letters and glad letters from the Virginia side and from the ———— side, but nothing did her [his wife] more good, or touched our hearts, kindled our gratitude and awakened our appreciation more than the warm and gracious words from your pen in the Baltimore Baptist. It has proved a rare exhilarant and tonic to Mrs. ————, to say nothing of its effect upon the rest of us. I feel that the ———— Association owes you a vote of thanks and I know I do. And Mrs.———— would have me write you at once how we feel about it and how deeply grateful she is to you for your delicate words about the home and the hostess."

His Summer was spent in his usual way,—attending Associations, holding revival meetings, lecturing, dedicating

Digitized by Google

churches and doing other such religious work. At the Potomac Association" said the Herald "Dr. Hatcher was in fine feather. Indeed, he was never happier and his words went straight to the mark. Tears and laughter; laughter and tears. The Orphanage took a long stride onwards and upwards."

He spent three Sundays supplying in Washington city. One day he met a young man who told him he was on his way to Richmond College, and to whom he said; "When you get to Richmond I want to help you to be happy."

"On the next Sunday" writes the young man "I united with his church in Richmond. Many a good word of cheer he spoke to me during my College days,—even offering financial aid if I should need it." He was constantly speaking kind words to the young men as he met them upon the highway,—especially to young preachers.

Dr. Andrew Broadus, Jr., writes:

"No man outside of my own family has so influenced my life for good and I feel sure that more preachers can say that of him than of any other Baptist preacher who has lived in Virginia."

Says Rev. J. L. Rosser:

"Were each of those whom he has helped on the way to bring but a single flower his resting place would become a mountain of bloom."

"Richmond, Va., Oct. 4th, 1891.

"My Dear E,—It is now 20 minutes to eight and as Powell of Mexico (who came to bring some Mexican boys to College) is to preach for me tonight I will begin my letter now.

"After church. Had a large but not a crowded audience for Powell. He got $180 and seemed well satisfied."

"I see much in my church to distress me. I am at a dark place in my work and see that I have got to be more with the Lord. A pastor can do nothing that is worth doing without getting Divine help at every point."

Digitized by Google

"*Monday*, 11 *o'clock*. Dr. Whitfield goes today up to Bethlehem to help Williams. Ah; can they have such sweet days as we had there. I hope they may."

On Oct. 11th, he writes me,—"I am concerned about your editorial work. Remember that a wise man puts as much work on others as he can.". . . He stopped over at Burkeville, where his daughter, Kate, was teaching school at the Institute. He writes, "She is the queen of the grove—everybody says that she is the princess squaw of the wig-wam and she is as happy as a morning lark."

Regarding my purchase of clothing, he writes. "I suggest that you be slow in buying and buy only what is first class."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVII

1891—1892

ENTERING NEW BUILDING. HUMILITY. BROKEN FRIENDSHIP. WAKE FOREST REVIVAL. CHESTERFIELD. HIS NEW BOY.

Often, from this time on, would his letters contain sentences like the following: "I went to Salem Thurdsay night and got home to breakfast Saturday morning. Things look well at Salem and the Orphanage has a golden dawn on its sky." These all-night trips, in behalf of his beloved Orphanage, made heavy drains upon his strength. "Not only was Dr. Hatcher a great factor in the maintenance of the Orphanage" said one of the Trustees "but, at least on one occasion, he saved the day for the institution, when it was trembling in the balance." Such work was the joy of his life and he kept it up until his life reached its end.

He found rich companionship in his two youngest daughters, Lill and Edith. He entered into their young lives and thus refreshed his soul, as well as put much sunshine on their pathway. Edith was visiting in Burkeville, and he writes me:

"Yesterday afternoon Lill and I took a ride to Manchester. Her companionship was most agreeable to me. As we came back I took her to Reugers and gave her a supper which she seemed to enjoy.

"It looks now as if I may soon publish a book of Character Sermons. If the arrangement is made I will preach my sermons over in a series this Fall and Winter, have them taken down by a stenographer and publish them in the Spring."

Unfortunately this was not done.

The day drew near for his church to enter their splendid new building. "It is truly a thing of beauty and seems to excite

Digitized by Google

THE NEW GRACE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

universal praise" he writes and then adds "I hope to see great times when we get into the new house."

"I came down town this morning" writes my mother "and stopped in [at the new building] for a few moments. Your father was showing Dr. W. D. Thomas through the building. He takes every one through whom he happens to meet, who might wish to see it."

"My people are somewhat nervous and over-worked" he writes "and show a little fretfulness at times, but I am surprised at my own patience. It looks as if nothing frets me and this is a great comfort to me. The fact is, I am so much in earnest about things that I am not moved by the small agitations that mark some of my impulsive people."

The new building was magnificient. They had not been able to complete the auditorium, but all the building except the auditorium was finished and the School room, with its side rooms opening into the larger room, furnished accommodation for 1000 and more.

Nov, 29th was the day for entering their new structure, but they awoke that morning to find the city wrapped in a blinding tempest of snow. "I was not in the least disconcerted by the weather" he wrote. "It mattered not to me that it snowed. We had the house and I was happy over that. I could not let a temporary inconvenience make me unhappy."

Now that the building strain, with its financial and material bothers was over, his next ambition was for a great spiritual revival for his church. "We had a glorious time today" he writes on the next Sunday,—"631 in the Sunday School cannot easily be beat. The congregation overflowed our chairs and had to be put into the adjacent rooms.

"Oh, for the power of the Holy Ghost. I hope to see it before the winter ends. I never had such low views of my gifts and performances as I now have. I amount to next to nothing. My work seems to be very mean and my power over people is not so great as it was. But I am not depressed by these

Digitized by Google

things. My mind is made up to do my best—if I have any best—and to trust in the Lord."

One of his cardinal traits was his humility. I had almost pronounced it his chief virtue, because out of it grew some of his richest qualities. "I believe" says Ruskin "that the first test of a truly great man is his humility." Dr. Hatcher's humility exercised a controlling influence over his intellectual forces. It was with him a mental. as well as a moral, attitude. Humility is not an abject self-depreciation, but a recognition of the difference between what we are and what we ought to be;—between what we know and what there is to be known. "As for me", says Socrates, "all I know is that I know nothing."

His lips recoiled from boastful words. How often I heard him say "I'm such a fool" or "I've got no sense." Frequently as a boy I would be in public meetings where certain speakers would indulge in high laudations of him,—as if he was something wonderful indeed—and when, after the meetings, I would expect to find him elated over the parade that had been made over him, I would get a little shock, as he would say, "Absurd! preposterous!" Even as a boy, he had a scorn for self display. The boy who in company sought to "show off" met his disapproval. He said that when he arrived at Richmond College for the first time he rode up from the depot in the same conveyance with another new student—besides his brother—and that he was startled at the bluster with which this new student gave orders to the driver and the pompous airs he assumed as he approached the College. His own feeling was one of trepidation, as he thought of how little he knew, and of how much knowledge the College before him stood for.

He had a mortal horror of being knocked down. Christ's picture of the man jumping into the highest seat at the Feast and being ordered by the host to vacate and move to the lowest seat must have been taught to him in his early days. At any rate he shrank from self exaltation.

One of the ruling ambitions of his life was to reach "the best" in every thing, and it was his struggle to reach "the best"

Digitized by Google

that kept him ever in sight of his limitations. His fear of the fool killer on his arrival at College was no jocular pretense.

He did not protest against kindly praise of himself that came to him from others. As a boy, he said he "yearned for appreciation" and it is not surprising that one who put himself so low, and gave his life so largely for the happiness of others, should have eagerly welcomed every token of appreciation and love from others.

"I dare not use the word "success" in connection with any part of my life" he once said. "I am so vexed, even in the fairest recollections of my work, by my ever deepening sense of inadequacy and unfaithfulness that I am afraid to admit even to myself that I could safely speak of my success in any of the graver undertakings of my life."

Let it not be thought however that this humility became self debasement, or that it injured his self respect. He put himself down but he did not permit others to assist him in the operation. When others attempted to retire him to the rear his sense of justice sprang into the arena. He had regard for his position as a minister and a pastor. On one occassion there was to be a marriage in Richmond in which he and a pastor from another city were to take part. The visiting pastor arranged the matrimonial programme and assigned him a very insignificant place on it which he felt that the conditions did not call for and he instantly imformed the visiting brother—with whom he was well acquainted—that he would not participate in the ceremony as arranged; he said that he was perfectly willing to bow himself out of the ceremony altogether but that if he took part it must be on a basis that would not put him at an insignificant place on the schedule. The brother knew too well the justice of the complaint and promptly readjusted the programme.

He delighted in the "family reunions" at Christmas. On this Christmas, his large subscription to his church building fund caused him to threaten small home expenditures for the holiday season and he wrote me at Louisville:

Digitized by Google

"We are preparing a royal welcome and short rations for the prodigals of the household. On the score of music, we will try to give full measure—perhaps we may dance a little, but the fatted calf is not expected to attend."

After the joyful festivities of the "reunion" I returned to Louisville. He drove me to the depot and on Jan. 10th, he wrote:

"I had a sorrowful heart when I parted from you on Friday night. As I got up Broad Street, I could see the train careering up the valley taking you away and I felt envious of its charge. Your visit was sunlight to me, and your going was a trial. . . . I can but pray that our lots may be cast near each other in the coming years.

"I have promised the girls an oyster supper at 10 1-2 to-morrow night."

A week later he writes:

"I spent last week in paying my debts and have few left. My debts and my money disappeared about the same time. Orie says I must tell you that I went out yesterday and bought a fine lot of table linen. We never had quite such a varied and elegant supply before. I still retain my ambition to have my home handsomely furnished provided things can be kept in good shape.

"My present plan is to make an earnest pull to awaken deeper spiritual zeal in my church. I am appalled at the coldness of my church. It crushes me to the ground."

In writing of a trip which he was planning to take he says:

"The big valise is down and my shirts, collars, etc., are snugly packed. I am quite rich in new collars, cuffs and cravats. I have also ventured to get me a new plain suit. It smites my soul to buy these things but I am compelled to waste (as it looks to me) on such sordid things as clothes. Money seems worthy to be spent on nobler objects. I feel sorry for a dollar that has to be degraded from the high purpose to which it might be devoted, to the common-place business of buying cuffs, or socks, or cravats. But we must have some regard to decency and comfort.

Digitized by Google

"This week has been chiefly great in its bad weather. Its most shining episode in my career has been the pulling of two of my most unaimiable and rickety teeth.

"I am getting tides of letters about my going on the Herald. It was manifestly the wise thing for me to do. . . Try to have time to read my piece—"The Two Brooms."

"I went to Manchester yesterday. . . and the very proximity to Chesterfield was balm to my spirit. . . Col. Peyton of the Rockbridge Alum Springs was at church yesterday and gave your mother and me a free ticket to the Springs next Summer. But I cannot stand the Springs it would ruin my constitution to spend a month at the Springs so long as I can work.

"Work is sweet to me and rest is not—though it will be after awhile. My revival power seems to be small of late. I have an opinion of myself which grows steadily in smallness."

Again he writes:

"I have a little cousin to stay with me tonight. His name is Frank ——— and his father is my first cousin. . . Life gets very sober to me. The death of Spurgeon struck me in a sensitive spot and put me to thinking. I must do my very best for the rest of my days.

"Heaven bless you. I am glad that you were so much edified by your trip to Shelbyville. You surely have my passion for going. It will follow you all your days."

His next letter to me calls up a striking incident in his life, which had several chapters. A few years before this time he and a party of ministers and laymen had taken a long, rough mountain ride to an Association. The trip was interpersed with outbursts of humor and fun on the part of Dr. Hatcher and others. In the party was Prof. ——— an intimate and honored friend of Dr. Hatcher, with whom he had in former years many hours of happy fellowship. Prof. ——— disapproved of the fun and humor of Dr. Hatcher and others in the party as being inconsistent with their dignity as ministers, and at some public gathering, he referred to Dr. Hatcher and

Digitized by Google

the others as "disgracing the cause of Christ by their levity."

The words went like an arrow and cut Dr. Hatcher deeply. It broke the close relations that had bound them together. Soon after that I found myself one afternoon in the buggy with my father headed for the College. A friend of his and of Prof. ———— had invited him out to the College for a game of croquet. He was happy in the prospect of the contest. On the croquet ground as we drove up were several gentlemen,—among them Prof. ————, and my father seemed to detect immediately a plan to bring him and his old friend into each other's company in the game and thus the heal breach,—a plan of which Prof. ———— also was undoubtedly ignorant. But my father took in the situation at a glance, and at once gathering up the reins, he turned the horse's head and drove on off the campus. I remember not what was said, but I got a strong impression that my father was in no mood for such a game with its reconciliatory attachments. He needed time; and time did its work, though the old friendship never returned and they never became equally as cordial as in former times, yet they often mingled in pleasant intercourse. It was at this time (February, 1892)—eight or ten years after the above incident occured—that he was holding a meeting in another city, not very far from which lived his old friend, to whom he referred in the following letter:

"Saturday morning"

"Prof. ———— and his daugther have been over to the meeting. They both gave me much kind attention and seemed set on my going over to ————, but I do not see any prospect of going. I have not been there for years—never since Prof. ———— and I had the unpleasant experience in ———— where he charged that ———— ————, and I disgraced the cause of Christ by our levity and inconsistency. I told him then that I freely forgave him for the wrong and would never harbor any unkind thoughts of him, but that I could never think of him as a friend nor exchange hospitable courtesies. We get along

Digitized by Google

together first rate and I would go to———— just to show my good will if I could, but I will not have time."

It is good to know that, as the years passed, he and Prof. ———— were thrown together in many pleasant experiences and co-operated on cordial terms in denominational work.

While the old friendship had suffered a wound from which it could never entirely recover, yet they held each other in high respect and esteem and he was ever glad to put honor on his friend of other days, and when the end came it was Dr. Hatcher, who was chosen to deliver the address at his funeral. He gladly responded to the request and it was a lofty, almost imperial, tribute which he paid to his fine old friend of the former years.

His friendships were among his most sacred treasures. Some of them maintained their freshness and sweetness to the end; some of them suffered shipwreck; some of them ended in tragedies.

In speaking of one of his broken friendships, he said, "If you cut a friendship open to see whether it is there you kill it." Some time after he made that remark one of his children became estranged from a dear friend and when the father said to the child that he hoped the friendly relations would continue the child replied, "You know Papa, you said if you cut open a friendship to see whether it is there you kill it." He said no more.

The latter part of February he began a revival in his church with Dr. W. L. Wright aiding him.

"My own letters to you are conceived in a rush and born in a flutter" he wrote a week or two later . . . "I have never felt so much helped by a meeting in my life. I have waked up to find that my own life is fearfully weak and wrong and that my ministry amounts to next to nothing. My heart is set on doing better. . . I had a charming incident to brighten the day. Just as I came into my study this afternoon a youth nearly grown came and said that he was converted under my sermon yesterday morning. It was very comforting

Digitized by Google

to me for I have had a depressing view of my ministerial weakness of late. Indeed I have been very weary of late. I cannot endure so much as in the past and you will have to begin to think of me as your old father after awhile. I have to spare my self far more than in my meridian days. But this is not so distressing to me, as you might think,—I mean my growing old."

"I believe your father preached about the finest sermon last Sunday" wrote my mother on the 9th, "that I ever heard from him, from Rev. 2:17. 'To him that overcometh etc.' He treated the christian life as a succession of four battles—at the gate (conversion), at the Cross (self sacrifice), at the heart (self mastery) and at death."

This was one of his greatest sermons. The subject was "The Four Battles" and he drew the picture of the overcoming life,—the life that was triumphant in its four supreme conflicts—and of the rewards which the text promised.

He held a series of meetings at Wake Forest College which marked a new era in his life. During all his ministry he had varied his work by holding revival meetings, usually in the country or in towns,—with occasional meetings in cities. Wake Forest was a College and it was destined to be the first in a series of Colleges at which he was to hold revival campaigns in the future. His evangelistic labors were to take an even wider circle and include large cities in other sections than Virginia and the South, An invitation came to him a few weeks later from Rev. Frank Dixon to aid him in meetings in California. "I can recall no part of my career as a minister" he said in his later life "that has been more interesting or fruitful than what it it has been my privilege to do in Colleges and Universities". His Wake Forest meetings worked a religious revolution in the institution. "The College is turned upside down" he writes. "The exercisies are suspended in favor of the meeting and the students and citizens are out in great crowds." My mother writes "A letter from your father yesterday says that the meeting is a cyclone", and upon his return home he writes:

Digitized by Google

"The joy of my life touched the zenith at Wake Forest. I never had such a meeting in my life. It was tremendous and you must put your imagination to work. Think of Bethlehem, multiplied by a sympathetic faculty, over 200 students, a village and a community all absorbed in the work. I staid until Saturday."

Those who attended his meetings testified that there was in them a power not of this world. It looked for a few days as if the Wake Forest meetings would not move the students; "but" said he "when Mercy came she brought the very glory of heaven with her. . . Our greatest day was election day which was also our last day. . . A day like that seldom comes in any human life. O christian reader share with us the gladness of having seen again the face of our risen Lord. Think of those hundreds of young people at this sensitive point in their destinies and pray for them."

Let us not attempt to describe his raptures during such an experience. The fire kindled in his heart in the Wake Forest meetings must have burned in his sermons on the next Sunday in his own pulpit, for he writes regarding his morning sermon "I suppose I never preached a sermon that moved them more."

He wrote me the latter part of May:

"I come to my desk to write you what I suppose must be my last letter with the direction Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on it. How many letters I have written you while you have been a Seminarian, and how miserably poor and gossipy they have been. I would regret to be judged by them, either on their literary, or intellectual, or religious merits, and yet I must say that I find a sort of regret that I shall write no more letters to you with the Seminary stamp upon them. These weekly unbosomings of myself to you have had their pleasures."

I had preached at one of the New York churches on the preceding Sunday and he wrote me on July 15th:

"Good morning my lad! How does the sky look to you this morning? How did you stand the storm yesterday? Did you smash the family name, or did you eclipse your father's fame? Tell me quick. My Powhatan expedition was golden."

Digitized by Google

August, 15th, while I was helping his life long friend, Rev. John R. Bagby, in revival meetings he writes me:

"It fairly infuriates me to reflect on the happy days you and Bagby will have this week. Envy fills my soul. You have taken your father's place and here I am a wanderer among strangers.

"But never mind. Next Saturday week, and I hope the Lord may bring our quartette together. Do not let Bagby flinch—or hesitate about the trip."

"My Dear Eldridge:

"I am now learning to write on the typewriter and I will pay you the compliment of my first letter to you. . . I am conscious that I can never be an expert at the business, my afflicted hand being the incurable barrier in the way. . . . Wednesday morning. . . I tell you it is a tremendous undertaking to visit all the homes in the Grace Street Church. Saturday morning. Ah, I know you will swell with envy when I relate my experiences for the last few days. Thursday afternoon, I went up to Hallsboro [in Chesterfield] to see the sick folks. . . Brother Bob Winfree met me there and after we had finished our visit he took me behind his fine nag and we swept down the road to his house. There we spent the night. Mrs W. gave us a delicious supper. A cheerful fire glowed in the grate. Bob and I had it all our own way. We made a sermon on the "Power of Woman's Faith", as seen in the case of Rahab. Bob thinks with quickness and vigor. His acquaintance with the Word of God is remarkable. . . . Friday morning we spent in study up to noon, and then we pitched a game of quoits. Bob's defeat was complete and disgraceful. We had six tilts and he never won a game. He was terribly humiliated. He said that if he could get some horse shoes he would blot me off the face of the earth.

"We learned that the quarterly church meeting at Bethlehem was in session. We resolved to give Brer Williams [the pastor] a surprise and so away we careered down the turn-pike to dear old Bethlehem. When we reached the scene, the men were holding a conclave in the house and the ladies were having a missionary meeting in the yard. Pretty soon he heard of our presence and came out after us. We went in and heard some of the discussions and they were quite interesting. The financial report was really encouraging. It showed that the

Digitized by Google

people were paying up very well. It was hinted that somebody had gone to pieces on his temperance pledge, but no name was given.

"In response to Brer Williams' invitation I spoke, my topic being the Orphanage. They were quite cordial and generous.

"After the meeting Bob and I rode by John Waddlington's and spent an hour or two. There Bob found some horse shoes and we had another pitching tilt. Six games were played and once more Bob was crushed. He won two and lost four. His losses for the day were ten out of twelve. I yelled, shouted and hurrahed over the victory as much as I chose. Bob was interestingly blue over the result. I spent the night with him and arrived home this morning by the Bon Air train.

"Monday morning. Here I am in my cosy study once more. It is a sort of Paradise to me. Here I lock the world out and have the luxury of unruffled repose. Often I retreat into this hiding place feeling that my soul and my body alike need its quiet rest. Not that I can afford to spend many of my moments here in idleness. But even work in this lovely place is restful to me.

"Miss Minnie S———— is at present with us as a guest of Kate's. She is really a superior woman. Tom S——— was her devoted slave all day yesterday. She takes my jokes concerning him quite aimiably. I have named him "The Suppliant". Of course she affects not to have the least idea as to what I am talking about. Yours. W. E. H."

Tom proved the victor.

"Richmond, Va., October 20th, 1892.

"My Dear Eldridge,—Tomorrow there is to be a mass-meeting at Dr. Hoge's church. . . My address will be short and unpretentious but I hope to put some sense in it.

"Tuesday afternoon, Thornhill and myself took a ride to Bon Air. How sacred to me seem the very roads, trees, streams of old Chesterfield. Whenever I get weary, lonesome, or sick, my thoughts turn tenderly to her sacred hills.

"Friday morning. I now write all my letters on my instrument. I am a little slow but I enjoy the performance with boyish pride. . . . .

"Saturday night. I worked hard this morning and resolved to take my overtaxed brain to the country. I picked up Dr. Whitfield, rolled him in the buggy and struck for the sacred hills. We went out to Branch's church and called on brother Bagby.

Digitized by Google

"Monday morning. Yesterday. . . floods of strangers were at our church in the morning. The crowd was really inspiring. . . At night my crowd was magnificent. The folks at home are well except your mother who has a cold. Edith is not much better, but her energy is wonderful. Nothing can discourage her. She studies with extraordinary perseverance. Lizzie marched off to the Institute this morning with your traveling cap on. She presented quite a jaunty air and had a bright and glowing face. I thought that she looked uncommonly well. Orie had a young medical beau last night."

A new boy was dropped into his life at this time in a curious and memorable way. It was the same old story of his heart opening towards a motherless boy. During the preceding Summer he had met a little orphan lad in the country by the name of Coleman M————, who was living with his step-mother. A short while before this, a gentleman and his wife, had asked Dr. Hatcher to keep on the lookout for a boy whom they might adopt and educate. "Coleman is the boy" said Dr. Hatcher to himself;"he is a promising looking lad and ought to be educated". The boy's step-mother agreed to the arrangement and it was decided that Coleman should be sent to the above mentioned gentleman and his wife. In a few days, however, the tidings came that the wife had died and thus the home was closed against Coleman.

This put another puzzle before Dr. Hatcher. It thrust upon him the question as to what should be done with the little Caroline orphan. "Somebody must be found who will take him" he said to himself, but no one appeared on the horizon. "Jennie" he said to his wife one night "suppose we take the boy into our home and educate him and try to make a man of him." She agreed and a few days later when the train from the North stopped at the Elba station, at his back gate, one morning Dr. Hatcher was at the depot to meet Coleman with his earthly belongings in his little suit case, and in a few moments the family, who were on tip toe of expectation to see the new boy, were greeting him around the breakfast table. Later that day my father wrote me:

Digitized by Google

"I cannot remember whether, or not, I wrote you in regard to a boy that I was interested in. He is an orphan and is from the county of Caroline. After trying various men to persuade them to take him I concluded to assume the charge of him and see if I could give him an education. I wrote for him to come down and he arrived this morning for breakfast. He is 12 years old and his name is M————. I have made an engagement with Miss Jennie Rudd to take him and teach him. She is very kind and will not charge him any tuition. Brother Rudd with his usual generosity offers to board him for the small sum of $8 per month. I will take him up there, or send him in a few days. Most likely I will go myself. I have not been up there since I was with you at Skinquarter in the meeting three years ago and am rather anxious to see them. I have in hand some money which I feel at liberty to use for the education of the fellow. How much I hope that he may fulfill my highest expectations."

Already he was drawing bright pictures of the boy's future. Like a sculptor he was dreaming of the figure which he hoped to fashion out of the rude block that he had brought from the country hills. Already he could, in imagination, see Coleman going through school and College in preparation for a noble manhood.

"James Coleman ————," writes my mother, "a little orphan boy that your father met up with this past Summer, has arrived and is being transmogrified to such an extent (by means of certain monies given your father for such boys) that he is looking quite genteel and sprightly. Your father's fondness and great love for boys is a constant wonder to me. He is never so happy as when one is around about him. Possibly one reason why Providence took away from him his two baby boys was that he might care for other boys who have no parents worthy, or able to care for them. Coleman is a genteel, bright looking fellow—shows rather good training. I hope the money may come to have him trained and properly educated."

The taking of this boy under his fatherly wing was no trifling event in the life of Dr. Hatcher. While he did not adopt Coleman as his own son, yet he took him into his heart, with the determination to do his very best for him. It put

Digitized by Google

a new star of hope in his own sky and no potter ever labored upon his shapeless clay with a more ardent devotion than did Dr. Hatcher upon the tender lad that Providence seemed to have placed in his hands. He carried Coleman up to Miss Jennie Rudd's school in Chesterfield, and on his busy Monday morning after his return, he writes him the following tender, characteristic letter:

"RICHMOND, VA., Nov. 7th, 1892.

"MY DEAR COLEMAN,—It made me sad to leave you on Saturday. As I took my parting glance at you through the car window, I asked the Lord to be your friend and to shield you from every danger and evil. Remember that I will pray for you every day. I hope you will often pray for me.

"I expect fine reports from you in your school. I know that you begin behind the rest and I will not expect too much at the start. All that I ask is that you be a studious boy and do your best.

"Do not be afraid to trust me. I wish you to come to me as to a father. If you get in trouble always tell me about it. If you feel that you have done a wrong thing I would not have you conceal it from me for anything. Be free to tell me all of your boyish trials. If you want anything, be free to come to me about it. I may not always give you what you ask for; I may not think it best for you, or I may not feel able to give it. I would act, in the case, as a father ought to act.

"I send you, by express, your books. I also send some material to make straps for your trunk. You need strapping on the top of the trunk to keep it from falling backwards, and also straps to the tray to enable you to lift it out. Ask Mr. Rudd, or Wortley, to fix it for you.

"I send you a Bible with the other books. This is for your regular use. You must save your other Bible in memory of your father. In a short time I will send you a Sunday overcoat.

"This is Monday morning and I am very busy. Give my love to the boys. Dont forget to write to me.

"Your True Friend,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

He had been appointed to preach the sermon before the Southern Baptist Convention in May and the text upon which he preached was the words "Experience worketh hope". He preached upon the text first to his own people.

Digitized by Google

"Your father," writes my mother, "has gone to the delectable plains of Chesterfield,—he said 'on a lark.' Well, he needed a change and shake up. I reckon the railroad hands all know him."

The "lark" included a visit in the interest of the Bethel church, of which his friend "Robert" was pastor. He urged them not to repair, but to rebuild, and he had some pleasant little tussles with the committee in several later visits. He said to his friend, Mr. W. W. Baker, one of the prominent members of the church, and one of his much loved friends; "Baker; Bethel is going to have a new church and you can be captain of the train, or you can buck and get run over."

On the next Sunday Mr. Baker gave his vote for the new building and his pledge for $750. The building campaign was begun and Mr. Baker says that one day, soon after that, while the workmen were tearing down the building Dr. Hatcher drove up on the church grounds. The walls were down almost to the ground, and Dr. Hatcher stood up in his buggy, surveyed the scene, and, with a happy smile directed at him and the others, he shouted, "Bless the Lord; Babylon has fallen!" In a few months the Bethel saints were worshipping in their handsome, new, brick structure.

To Coleman he writes on Dec. 5th, "It would cut me terribly to find that you did not get your lessons well. You are to be my bright student boy in the days to come. . . . I am very anxious for you to be learning to speak in public. . . I will send you a little speech which I want you to have ready by the time I come up to see you."

He writes mé:

"Yesterday was not a big day with me. There were some jolts and pull-backs in my work. Hence I claim the right to be grum and moody this morning." There was no serious trouble in his church but as there is no household so well desciplined that jars and misunderstandings never occur so we need not be surprised if in the best of churches human

Digitized by Google

nature should sometimes make an unseemly exhibition of herself. My mother in the following letter hints at those same "jolts and pull-backs."

"Last evening your father and I attended a very swell "At Home" given by Dr. Kerr's church [Presbyterian], or rather by the young men. Your father was invited to make an address. I was specially glad that your father did it well. Things have been going rather against him lately and he had had much to discourage him. But he is such a Roman that he can mount above things that keep others down. I sometimes think that he is not appreciated by his people. He so leads them on to attempt great things that he forgets to ingratiate himself into their affections as other pastors do. His eye is fixed on others and the future good of the cause and in doing so has to sacrifice his own well being and sometimes his popularity. He is off today to Sussex for a lecture on tomorrow."

He writes to his little country lad:

"RICHMOND, VA., Dec. 16th, 1892.

"MY DEAR COLEMAN,—I am anxious for you to present Miss Jennie with a suitable Christmas present. If I can, I will send you something to give her. Do not tell her about it. When you give it to her I want you to write her a nice note, wrap it up in the paper with the present and hand it to her. In the note you must thank her for all her kindnesses to you. Be sure not to say anything to anybody about the present until you have given it.

"I am glad to tell you that I have a new everyday suit for you. These I will send you before very long and also the overshoes. The clothes will be for your school suit. You must keep the old suit to wear when you have any rough work to do.

"When you write me, next please answer these questions. Do you ever clean your teeth and if so how often? Do you change your shirt bodies and stockings twice a week as I told you to do? How often do you wash your feet and neck? How do you usually spend your Sunday afternoons? Have you ever been kept in after school and, if so, how often and for what reason? Do you ever see Mr. Williams [the pastor] and does he ever talk to you? Now take your time and give me a good answer to these questions.

Digitized by Google

"God bless you my precious boy. I do not want you to think of me as asking too much of you. That I am not going to do. But I am anxious to make a bright boy out of you and of course this will require a lot of hard work on your part. But I will never give you more than you can do. Think of me often and remember that I often pray for you.

"Your devoted Friend,

"W. E. Hatcher."

I might mention at this point that he delivered an address before the North Carolina Baptist State Convention,—and yet why mention this? The reader must understand—if indeed he has not long ago surmised it—that this narrative does not seek to account for all the days of his overflowing life. In fact we have not the record of the uncountable meetings which he held, the addresses and lectures which he delivered, the sermons which he preached, the churches dedicated, the denominational conferences and conventions attended, the trips taken and his other manifold labors. It is only a very few of his public services that are chronicled in these pages,—chiefly those that tend to reveal what manner of man he was.

"I get no news from Chesterfield" he writes. "Hurry up and come on and let us sweep up the hallowed heights once more. It would be golden days, brought back, to break in upon the Lybargers again. We are preparing for a scanty Christmas. The fact is that we are a house of dyspeptics and the less we eat the better for our interiors. But, at a venture, I got a roaring big ham this afternoon."

He stated that there were many new Baptists moving into the city who liked to be coaxed into some church and that he hated the competition between the pastors in securing these strangers, and then added "It is not healthy. But of course I must put in my work and get my share of the spoils."

He writes again:

"608 W. Grace St., is somewhat after the order of a deserted banquet hall. Four girls and the smouldering remains of myself constitute our present actual assets.

Digitized by Google

"I think that my Grippe has finally relaxed its enfeebling hold upon me and I feel that Richard is himself again,—which being interpreted means that Brer Hatcher is very much better."

He delivered, at this time, a memorial address on Dr. J. L. Burrows at the First Church and, among other things, said, "More than once I said to Dr. Burrows that I would never be able to tell him how much I loved him, but that, at his funeral, I would tell others."

On Jan 8th, he writes me; "I am afraid I am too fond of frolicking and that I may lead you into my bad habits. You must not copy my weakest points but look out for the better ones,—provided you can find any of the latter sort.

"We had nobody at home to dinner with us. We had roast chickens but they were venerable and tough. I was not in festive mood, and did not linger for the dessert."

Again he writes: "Tonight we had stewed rabbit, light rolls, batter cakes until you could not rest and several other things, flung in for filling up. We had quite a festive time at the table. Kate is "wrastling" with the question of her visit to you. I am leaving her to her own choosing in the case.

"Lill is studying too hard. It hurts me to see her tug so constantly and it seems to make her rather nervous and irritable. But I think she will make a mark in the world some of these days. Edith has been unusually bright for several weeks but I do not think she is quite well just now. I have tried to keep her from school this terrible weather but she insists on going.

"Today is the first that Coleman has been out, since he was taken with chicken pox. He has spent most of the day with me at the study. He is a simple hearted, trustful creature and clings to me in a really trustful manner. Tonight Tom is going up to spend the night with him and I believe that the children are fixing for a small display of Charades. I have bought a small supply of candy and ginger snaps for the occasion.

"Monday. It is now nearly 4 P. M. After an interesting time at the Conference I took Bob Winfree, Pitt and Landrum and also my little Coleman to lunch at Reuger's. It was really a captivating experience. I think the dinner was good and the chat was entertaining in the highest degree. From that

Digitized by Google

place, I hurried back to my study to finish this letter. The children had a roaring time Friday night with their charades."

In this letter he tells of another service which he was seeking to render his beloved "Chesterfield". It was the erection of a monument, by the Chesterfield people, in honor of their "beloved physician", that he was seeking to promote, and in such a movement they delighted to co-operate. Concerning the monument he writes:

"Yesterday (Thursday) was the day set for the memorial services in honor of Dr. Hancock. We had a royal meeting. Thornhill presided and Bob and I made speeches. We also organized a Memorial Association for the purpose of building a monument to the memory of the 'beloved physician'. We raised nearly two hundred dollars on the spot and could have gotten a much larger sum if we had pressed the matter."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVIII

1893—1894

PLAYING QUOITS. "UNCLE DAVID." THE YOUNG PEOPLE. SERMON BEFORE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. DEDICATION OF THE NEW GRACE STREET CHURCH BUILDING. MOODY MEETINGS.

His love for games, as he grew older, did not abate, but changed from Croquet to Quoits. He would play with the Baptist pastors at their picnics at Forest Hill Park. But his favorite battle field was the front lawn at his friend Robert Winfree's in Chesterfield. Here they would have their contests, into which he threw himself with boyish enthusiasm. In the games he would plan, threaten, shout, study his own mistakes, keenly watch his antagonist, groan over his defeats, and make the welkin ring over his victories. After such conflicts he and Robert would come into the house all aglow with the exhilarations of the game and would turn with eager relish to the sermon preparation for next Sunday. Oft-times he and Robert would discuss the text from which he expected to preach. Sometimes he would give his entire visit to the social pleasures and recreations and return to Richmond "made over" physically and mentally. On the 20th, he writes, regarding one of these encounters on the Quoits' grounds.

"Friday I skipped away (just by way of variety you know) to the snow-capped heights of Midlothian. It was a secret bargain between the incorrigible Bob and myself that I would come and when I dismounted from the one o'clock train there he was in his buggy up the road in eager waiting for me. It took his fleet nag but a few minutes to bring us to his door.

Digitized by Google

A fire glowed in his grate and the ground was in sublime trim for quoits. You may be sure we tussled long and hard. The train left me on Saturday morning and we had a full pull until the afternoon train.. Bob is improving but he is not yet quite able to cope with your humble "fardour". At the end we had played twenty five games with the result,— Bob 7, and I 18. But he was well up in other respects. He got 346 in all and I got 487. It was a great relief to me and did me much good.

"He is begging me to meet him at Hallsboro next Thursday and go to Skinquarter with him, but I hardly think that I can go."

He draws two pictures of his efforts to help other people. He first mentions a young pastor, about whom he thus writes:

"He has a big trouble on hand with the boss spirit in his church. Landrum and myself have been piloting him over the stormy seas and actually got him to land, but in the very moment he put foot on the shore, he turned a somer-sault and tumbled headlong again into the billowy deep. It was a really curious and distressing mistake and I will tell you about it when we meet. He will have to resign."

The other was the case of a gentleman who was the head of one of the educational institutions of the city, in whose school had occurred a commotion that threated to disrupt the school. The gentleman anxiously sought his counsel and he writes me about it, saying that the brother was unable to quiet the maddened students, and his letter thus continues:

"It is ticklish business and he is in danger of a first class stampede. I am trying to help him guide his trembling bark but he forgets what I tell him and has to come back again to to hear it over. He has an honest, but not a judicial mind. He was at church tonight (Sunday) and gave me a big sitting before he let me off. Everybody is gone and I am tugging at this dry and pointless letter. As I am now approaching the bottom of the page I will bid you good night and will try to see you in the morning."

His attitude towards his old sexton, David Parsons, showed his ability to detect worth in all classes of people. "Uncle

Digitized by Google

David" had in him some fine traits and Dr. Hatcher and he were friends; they admired each other and as for David he knew well his place and would have walked many a weary mile in his service for Dr. Hatcher. He was tall and dignified and had acted as butler in the home of Dr. Jeter for many years. On special occasions in the pastor's home,—such as New Years' Receptions to the church, or "Breakfasts" or "Dinings' to preachers—uncle David would be mustered into service and would be in his element, as with respectful dignity, he would move around the table.

The old man had one mournful fault, his indulgence in whiskey. It brought him sometimes to shameful collapses, sorely grieved Dr. Hatcher and, yet, always found the pastor on his side when he was attacked by any of the pugilistic members, who whiled away some of their idle moments by taking a fling at the sexton. One Wednesday evening Dr. Hatcher reached the church about eighteen minutes before the time for the prayer meeting service and found the church shrouded in darkness. He called out "David; David!" and a sound on the front bench told him, in a flash, that the old sexton was "down again". Most unceremoniously did the pastor hustle the old man out of the dark room into the coal room; where he rolled himself into a knot. The pastor then lit the lamps, distributed the hymn books and had everything in order by the time the people began to assemble for the meeting.

In a day, or so, David arrived on the scene and the erectness of his form, the elasticity of his step and the flash in his eye showed plainly that he had taken himself through a reformatory course and, with a scorn for his recent wickedness, had started himself upon a career of immaculate behavior for the rest of his days. He had served the church long and well. He had lost his wife and at this time had become a great sufferer from an absess. At first, the church was sympathetic towards him, but he was slow in recovering and the church building was suffering neglect from his absence. Dr. Hatcher writes:

Digitized by Google

"David, our venerable sexton, is yet laid up for repairs and, I much fear, with no good chance of being up soon. His substitutes are not efficient and give us considerable trouble. The Committee on Premises are getting restless and I fear that they will feel it necessary to get another man. It would be the removal of a way-mark from my road for old Dave to be put off. It would almost be like a notice to me to be packing my traps."

After the old man's death he paid him in the public print, a high and affectionate tribute.

"March, 25th, 1893.

"My Dear Eldridge,—*Tuesday after dark.* We had a whopping big dinner at our house today. The guests were many and honorable. Let me name the names thereof,—(the men all ministers)—: Bagby of Farmville, Bagby of Suffolk, Burrows of Georgia, Barker and wife of Petersburg, Pritchard of North Carolina, Miss Kate Fife of Charlottesville, Ellis of your town [Baltimore] and our own domestic gang, which, when put together, made a big pile. After dinner we had a deluge of callers, among them Dr. Woodfin of Hampton. I forgot to name the name of Brer Wharton among the guests at our dinner.

"By noon it cleared and Dr. Ellis and I put out for Manchester, where we had a hardly contested fight on the Quoits Field and I got the best in the struggle by only one game. He beat me last Saturday and so we are now equal.

"The Dispatch of today announces that you have been called to the First church at Norfolk. It has of course put everybody to talking and they all seem to imagine that I can tell at once what you will do in the case. You will have to settle that for yourself. I think that the feeling, is in favor of your going.. . I hope that you may not err in making up your mind."

One of the most interesting sights in his church services on Sunday was the young people. They were present in throngs and took happy part in the exercises. In a letter to me, describing his "Sunday", he says "Today has been heaven itself at our church. . . There must have been six hundred at the Communion season. . . I am on the joyful hills," To this, he adds: "I have never had my boys behave quite so sweetly as they do now. I made a few of them sing a piece

Digitized by Google

at the service tonight. They did it well and the people were much interested." The hymns for each service were printed on paper slips which were distributed by the boys before the exercises began, and gathered up afterwards. His larger boys would take up the offerings at the evening service and, in many ways, the youths of his congregation were linked in the church programme. The boys were generally crowded together on the front benches, in the "Amen Corners" and,—in times of an overflow,—they were strung along the edges of the pulpit platform.

"It used to be said that other churches decorated their pulpits with flowers," he writes "but that I made bold to decorate mine with boys."

It was a happy picture they presented with their beaming faces. It put everybody in a bouyant frame to see the boys and it gave a reality and spontaneity to the service.

"Our choir is in chaos still" he writes on Nov. 6th "B———— P———— played the organ yesterday [at the Sunday service] and a shivering few took the platform to steer the praises of the day. I marched up a few of my boys and made them sing a couple of choral pieces which went quite well."

Referring, at a later time, to the manner in which the young are treated in many churches, he writes:

"They are not treated as worshippers. They are often pushed out and back for the accommodation of the older people until they are grouped far from the pulpit. Sometimes they are absolutely hustled out of the house, in case of crowds, as if they were of no importance and had no rights nor duties and as if it was the royal proof of gallantry to give seats to late coming women, even though it involved the making heathen of the children.

"They are given no recognition, have no place they can call their own, no hymn books are furnished them, nothing done to interest them in the worship and if they, for the lack of something else to do, whisper, or prank, or scuffle with each other, they are dealt with as offenders, branded as outlaws

Digitized by Google

and threatened with punishment at home, or at the bar of the law and even at the bar of God. Oh, Christian men the worst heathen on the earth could not treat their children with more barbarous cruelty.

"It is enough to fill us with anguish to think of the uncounted thousands of our boys, and our girls as well, who have been alienated from the church and from religion forever by this stern and unsympathetic treatment."

His Sunday services, were joyous and inspiring and one explanation of it was the throng of children that crowded about the front.

"But are children capable of worship?" was a question that was once asked him and his reply was as follows:

"I do not raise the issue as to the capacity of children for worship. Indeed we must readily admit that there are heights and depths of worship which children may not reach. . . . Even the most cultivated and experienced of worshippers are often oppressed with the insufficiency of their worship and we need not be startled if the young stumble and blunder when they attempt to worship.

"But many of these children are not converted" cries the objector "and if not converted how can they engage in worship?"

In reply he continues:

"I cannot invade the domain of God's secret dealings with souls. That is out of sight and I must not tug at the curtain to peep through. . . It looks vulgar and impertinent for men to be blustering around when children are seeking to worship to ask whether they have been converted.

"For my life I cannot tell whether the children that thronged around Jesus that day in the Temple were converted or not. That question was not started by Christ, though there were some fearfully sour and querulous people present, who were openly suspicious of the children, saw only disorder in their conduct and, besought Jesus that he would call up the noisy set, box their ears and force them to shut up their rattling little throats. Indeed, I cannot dare to describe the measure of the light which these children had. . . They seemed to have only one sentence to say; it was the sum total of their

Digitized by Google

formula of worship. They leaped and ran and surged about the Lord and cried with all the power of their little voices, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'. . . It is enough for me that Jesus Christ openly and, in the face of criticism, accepted the tribute of worship which the little children brought him in the temple, and, in the light of that fact, I believe in, and feel it my solemn and glorious privilege to advocate, on all occasions, our duty to teach the children to join heartily in the worship of God."

The Convention sermon, which he was to preach in May, put him on his mettle, and it would be impossible to tell the number of hours which he spent during these weeks on its preparation. "It begins to open finely before me" he writes. "This week I am going to take it into the brush and make it shine, if I can. I will go up to Bob's and spend most of the week, coming down for my Wednesday night prayer meeting." Again he writes:

"I have written my sermon this week, but propose to write it again by Wednesday night and then lip out Thursday and get it in my noddle by Saturday. Then I hope to have ease of mind. It is not good, but I hope the added blessing of the Lord will make it good."

In a letter telling of a visit to Bethlehem, he says:

"I went to get the folks to send Williams [the pastor] to the Convention. It went through with a little pushing. He will go. There were not many present."

After telling of his ups and downs in his campaign to raise $12,000 for finishing his church building, he adds: "but I am forging ahead with banners prancing in the zephers. . . . I am possessing my soul in patience and not falling out with anybody."

He preached his sermon at the Nashville Convention. The audience was vast and consisted of representative Baptist ministers and laymen from all the states of the South and, for him, it was a mountain-top experience. "It was, we judge, the best preaching of his life" says the Herald "and that is

Digitized by Google

high praise. The spiritual effect was remarkable. . ." His text was, "Experience worketh hope."

The sermon began with the words "The experience of the text is high born; its mother is faith, its grandmother, tribulation and its father, the God of heaven."

Soon after his return to Richmond, he writes that his people were greatly cheering him about his sermons. He says "Even the taciturn and critical are full of kind words for me. But the scamps look as if it torments them if I get out of the corporate limits of the city. They catch me every time I cross the James."

My mother writes:

"I am afraid your father's reply to Dr. ——— this week will provoke censure. I wish it had not happened. It will teach some folks they had better keep their tongue. No one can floor him. He was not born for that sort of business. His sword of repartee is trenchant and fatal. He is now preaching for old Mr. Bagby—comes home tomorrow."

He heard that one of the members of the B—— church had begged everybody's pardon and brought on a revival. He writes that he wanted to go up to the meetings, saying. . . "The devil is on the run and I want to join in the pursuit."

After a busy Summer he took up his Fall and Winter work with unusual bouyancy of spirit. After writing of the good understanding which he and his fine horse, "Bruce," had with one another he continues:

"I am driving my visiting cart over hill and dale. My people never seem so innumerable as when I undertake to go to see them. I find a genuine joy in going around among them. (Here is the funeral).

"(Later). I had a tiresome trip to the funeral. It was at A—— B——— stock farm fully a mile beyond the ——— Buildings. . . The audience was composed mainly of horse men and it was an ill smelling gang. But I was glad to speak to them.

"A matrimonial cyclone struck Richmond last week" he writes. ". . I did not share in the spoils of the upheaval

Digitized by Google

except to the extent of marrying Miss Annie McDowell at the end of the service.

"Today, (Sunday), is gloom itself, with the storm and rain. . . . I loaded my guns for the Education Board, but I concluded to hold my fire on that until we have fairer skies. This required me to rush to the front some of my lighter homiletical artillery. I fired off a suddenly made sermon on seeking first the kingdom of God etc. My folks went quite wild over it. They asked me to repeat it."

His ability to preach well a hastily prepared sermon was the reward of his hard practice in his early ministry.

Coleman, his orphan lad, had sent him, at his request, a list of all his possessions, in the way of books, clothes, etc., He read the letter, marking in it all the mistakes and, at the bottom, wrote:

"8 mistakes
Be careful also about
your capital letters."

He stepped across the line into 1894, little suspecting the bright days that awaited him. My mother writes on Jan. 14th:

"By the way, your father broke the buckle of his cravat this [Sunday] morning, after he had begun his services and he had to take it off and preach without it. He said he would not attempt to fix it—but would lay it aside and he hoped some one would invent a better way of keeping cravats on or he would have to leave them off altogether,—or something to that effect. He was, as usual, equal to the occasion. A titter went around his congregation and he continued his sermon."

His Sunday night letters describing his glorious Sunday services would fill a book in themselves. Week by week, he tells the story of overflowing congregations, and mountain-top experiences. To Coleman he writes on Jan., 15th:

"I was sorry to learn that you were expecting an invasion of the mumps. That is the poorest sort of a thing for any youth to have and I wish you would escape it or rather I wish that you had had the miserable thing a long time ago. Where

Digitized by Google

have you been hiding all your life that you have never been picked up by those various diseases. You have not had your rights not even in the way of having diseases."

When Coleman's report came it was marked "Golden Report" and he thus writes:

"'A Golden Report', you say. Well done my noble youth. That sets my heart to dancing with pride and delight. As for my little 'Scraggie' [one of his names for Coleman] I will by the help of the Lord, look after him and aid him to become a boy worth talking about. I wonder if he will not try to do the very best that he is capable of. Somehow, I think that he will.

"I am glad that you took Mrs. Rudd out for a ride; that is right; be good to her. She is lovely, but not strong. Do everything you can to lighten her cares and smooth her path. She will love you and God will bless you for it.

"Your Same Old Friend,
"W. E. Hatcher."

He writes me of a minister who spoke for him on Sunday morning at Grace Street:

"The congregation towered. It was an honor to the city. ——— preached or rather, spoke and did it splendidly well, except (and this quite a gigantic exception) he spoke for a full hour and a quarter added. Say what you will, folks are averse to long services. I fear that it told on the collection. I hinted to him that he ought not to pass a second over an hour and to halt inside of that, but he had the stuff and could not persuade himself to cut any of it out. I am going to study my sermons more closely and trim them down to 30 minutes. Ordinarily that is enough and what goes after that is subtraction and not addition. At my Boys meeting I had 76 present and duly labeled. It was a sight.

"But for the rainbow promise one might imagine from the look of the heavens this morning that there was going to be another Noachic (is that the spelling?) flood. But goo-by.

"Ever True, W. E. Hatcher."

Two events loomed on his path,—the coming of the great evangelist, D. L. Moody and the dedication of his completed

Digitized by Google

church building. For many months he and his people had been worshipping in their Sunday School room, but after a severe, financial campaign their magnificent new auditorium was finished. There was none like it in the state. He now stood at what was, up to that time, the highest point of his ministry. Dr. John A. Broadus was to preach the dedication sermon and all manner of other bright features were to form a part of the dedicatory services. "We are trying to make it the most impressive occasion that Richmond has ever witnessed" he wrote. His love of thoroughness and of the artistic made him build up a programme for the dedication that was attractive in every detail. He not only trained certain ones who were to take special part but on the preceding Sunday, he rehearsed his entire congregation . "You ought to hear them chant the Lord's prayer," he writes.

"Dr. Broadus delighted us very much", writes my mother; "by putting in his appearance on the balmy Saturday, just before dinner. Dr. Thomas (W. D.) and Harris were invited to dine with him, but the latter had company. We gave a course dinner and all pronounced it a success. Dr. Broadus was at his best and the small talk and the after-dinner talk was most delightful—reminiscences being endulged in to some extent and the jocund element playing its appropriate part, to say nothing of the inevitable pun. Dr. Broadus said he told his class that it was the height of politeness not to let on when you heard a joke the second time, etc."

At the table that day Dr. Broadus spoke of one of the Hatcher children in very complimentary terms, referring to that child as being "gifted".

"He then said with a twinkle" continues my mother " 'of course it could not be otherwise'. Your father and I thanked him and he looked towards me and facetiously said 'Oh, I meant you of course.' Your father was equal to the occasion, as he always is, and replied appropriately."

But Sunday was the day of days,—the day on which they gathered in their beautiful new auditorium. He writes:

Digitized by Google

"It exceeded our highest expectations both in the badness of the weather and the wonderful interest shown in the occasion. The ends of the earth were on hand and everything went gloriously."

In writing of the praises of their building he says:

"The ————es, ————s, etc., etc., went wild except when we handed the hat around. They were a little shy and noncommittal then, though we did pick up an X from ————. But this is inter nos.

"The fact is that my study is a gallery of beauty. You never saw the like of fine things in one poor Baptist preacher's study. Tell Wharton (M. B.) that I have been praising his new study ever since I saw it last Summer. But now I would have to put on my old clothes to think of entering his. He must come up and see it."

In the meantime, the great Moody campaign is on. A large tabernacle capable of seating 5,000 people had been erected and Dr. Hatcher, as chairman of the general committee, found his days and nights crowded with duties. He regarded Mr. Moody as a mighty man of God and accorded him high and affectionate admiration and from the glorious celebrations of the dedication day he plunged into the evangelistic campaign.

"Your father is the generalissimo of the Moody meetings," writes my mother. "That will give him a good deal more work. He does not seem to mind it."

"Moody came yesterday", he writes me. "He had a ripping crowd and a freezing hall at his first service last night. I did much quarreling with the building committee for not having better arrangements for heating the room. But they could not see the use for it and hence these icicles. I was righteously out of humor last night, with a leaning to the side of mercy. Better things are promised tonight."

On Tuesday the telephone rang. It was Mr. Moody. "Can I get Grace Street Church for my meetings?" he asked. The cold spell made the Tabernacle uncomfortable; the request was granted and in the new and beautiful auditorium the multitudes gathered for two days.

Digitized by Google

"The chairmanship of the Moody meeting", he writes. "imposes an endless array of detail work upon me.

"Of course Moody owns the town. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that 10,000 were shut out of the tabernacle yesterday. The room was overrun last night two hours before preaching time. We had extra meetings at several churches, but the floods of the disappointed rolled away and got nothing. You know that we had trouble with the tabernacle on account of the cold snap. Moody asked me to let him come to our church until the weather changed and we had him for five services. The folks were terribly afraid that the crowd would ruin things in the new house and the tobacco fiend did hurt us a little. But I was glad to have him in the house. He was delighted with it and said that it was wonderful that we could build such a house for $75,000. I did not tell him that it cost under $70,000. The power of Moody's work is growing.

"We had only morning service yesterday. I preached to an order of some unrememberable name. There were about 200 of them. I suppose that I had just about enough to have packed my floor with this 200."

As chairman of the general committee he had many pleasant experiences with Mr. Moody. Among other things it was his part to select the different ministers who should at each service lead in prayer. Mr. Moody said:

"I insist on one point, and that is that the men selected to lead in prayer must have voices that will carry to the verge of the building."

At one of the evening services Dr. Hatcher stepped down to a minister and asked him to be ready to offer the next prayer. The brother said he would do so. He was of large build and looked as if he could "roar like a lion." Dr. Hatcher whispered to him:

"It is not easy to be heard in this tabernacle. When Mr. Moody calls for the prayer you must go at once upon the platform where Mr. Moody is and have strict regard to the distinctness and reach of your articulation."

"Oh, it will be easy for everybody to hear me" insisted the brother of large bulk. He spoke with unconcerned air and

Digitized by Google

there he stood waiting for his performance. In a few moments Mr. Moody called for the prayer.

"My brother of the massive chest," writes Dr. Hatcher, "firm in the conviction that he had only to open his mouth and a good part of the earth would hear, began his petition in a subterranean tone, an inarticulate mumble, and Moody squirmed and shook with impatience. At last he could hold out no longer and he said in an awfully commanding way, "Pray louder there, will you."

"But the unimpassioned petitioner drawled along, never lifting his voice and plodding to a very slow end. After the prayer was over and the house was full of song, with his eyes to the floor, he turned reproachfully and said: 'What on earth did you select that man for?' I said to him: 'Look here, Mr. Moody, I try to work in men from the several Denominations and, in some cases, I have to take my chances on the brethren; I am not posted as to their vocal ability. As for that man, I measured him for a far reacher, but I slipped up'. A faint light of good humor flitted across his face, but never a word he said. I urged Mr. Moody to exercise his own judgment in the choice of men to lead in prayer. A few prominent men he knew, some by name and others by appearance. When he wanted one of the latter class to pray he would turn and point at him, rather, grotesquely, as it seemed to me, and would say, 'You pray' and if he knew the men he would call them by name. There was one charming Methodist preacher always present, very attractive and evidently most pleasing to Mr. Moody. It was the Rev. Dr. Tudor, one of the choicest of my own friends. But Mr. Moody got it into his head that the brother's name was Truder and he was very fond of calling on him to pray. He would cry it out with great emphasis:—'Let us all join with Dr. Truder in prayer.' The humor of it actually turned into mischief and most of the brethren, when they came up on the platform, before the exercises commenced, took pains to pay their compliments to 'Brother Truder' and before the meeting ended 'Brother Truder' was a part of the makeup, the happy life and the comradeship of the platform. Even to this day, when on street or train, I have the happy fortune to meet this extremely fine brother, I hail him as 'Dr. Truder' and then we talk of Moody,—the honest, great hearted Moody, of the days we had with him and how he had glorified God by his death."

Digitized by Google

He had another pleasant tilt with Mr. Moody in the meetings. He learned that each night hundreds of workingmen were turned away from the tabernacle. Being unable to get to the meetings at an early hour they would find, upon their arrival each evening, the building crowded and the doors shut. He (Dr. Hatcher) greatly desired that seats be reserved for this class of men. He thus writes:

"Mr. Moody had the deadliest antipathy to empty seats. He seemed to regard them as one class of enemies that he might hate with all possible abhorrence. In some way, they suggested to him a lack of interest, a possible failure, or a lack of progress. So pronounced was this feeling in him that he opposed every suggestion as to reserved seats. During this meeting the crowds were so vast that the auditorium would fill a full hour before the time for service, and fill with the idle and the indulgent, to the exclusion of thousands of men who were eager to hear the noble evanglist. To me the ushers and the people were firing all sorts of complaints and I appointed a committee of two of our most eminent ministers, Dr. W. J. Young, Methodist, and Dr. W. W. Landrum, Baptist, to see Mr. Moody and tell him the situation. They came back hopelessly dilapidated. They said Mr. Moody was utterly opposed to it and that things would have to go on as they were. Two prominent gentlemen, Gen. A. L. Phillips and Col. Swineford, had charge of the ushers and of the seating of the congregation and they were greatly disgruntled by Mr. Moody's decision. I chanced to pass them while driving up the street and they said, in a tone of good natured reproach, that some arrangement ought to be made for allowing the men to hear Mr. Moody. I said, rather jocosely, but with earnestness at the bottom, that if I had the right kind of committee, I would have the men in the house that night, but I told them if I were to give them an order and Mr. Moody gave them one cut with his eye they would take to the woods. In a breath they said: 'give us a chance,—tell us what to do and you'll get it.'

'Rope off 1000 chairs tonight near the Main Street door', I said and cracked my horse and was gone.

"That night, when I entered the tabernacle, there—not far from the pulpit on the right—was a desert in the midst of a crowded population, and when at seven-thirty Mr. Moody entered and sat down by me he saw those untenanted chairs and

Digitized by Google

his face clouded at once. He turned rather fiercely on me and said, 'What does that mean? I am opposed to reserved seats.'

"I took out my watch and looked at it. It lacked twenty-seven minutes of eight. I said: 'Mr. Moody you begin preaching at eight o'clock every night and all I ask is that you will wait until five minutes before eight. The streets are full of people and this house is full of women and if within this time these vacant chairs are not occupied I will see that every one is filled before you take your text'. In about ten minutes the men out on the street found that there was a chance and it looked like an army charging a castle. They tumbled in eager, serious and with evident delight. I drew my watch, opened it and held it before Mr. Moody. He uttered not a word. But that unbroken pack of men right there before him kindled new fires in his soul and he preached like a man risen from the dead.

"That night in making the announcements for the next day he said: 'I want to ask the ushers to reserve one-half of this building, tomorrow night, for men'. Never a word passed between him and myself in regard to the incident and I confess that his new manifestation of reasonableness and of readiness to adjust himself to a situation added one, or two, additional cubits to his stature, in my estimation."

He received a letter from his orphan boy, Coleman, that gave him much joy, because of the affectionate appreciation which it breathed. It was too seldom that he heard words of loving gratitude from those whom he helped and when this boy showed such gratitude it sounded like sweet music. In the midst of absorbing engagements he wrote a fine love letter to Coleman in reply.

"My Dear Boy,—Here is your letter. It reached me this morning. It is not as carefully written as I would like, but I can overlook this as you were to have two examinations on that day.

"But there was something in the letter that was worth more to me than grammatical accuracy. What do you suppose it was? It was the cheerful way in which you spoke of your visit home and of your expressions of love for me and your desire to be with me. That came home to my heart. . . I think of you in the day and in the night. You are my own

Digitized by Google

darling boy and nobody on earth has a right to one little finger of you except myself. There is not enough money in the United States treasury to buy you from me. You may be as wicked as you will and break my heart by your ingratitude, but I will stick to you. If I can, I will make a first class man of you. I pray for you. I spend my money on you. I correct you if you go astray, but whether I deny you, or please you, I am toiling to make such a boy as God will bless and use for his honor.

"I am much comforted by every proof that you give me of your love. I want you to love me and I am glad every time you tell me that you do love me. How I wish I had you right here now. How I would say, 'Walk right here and give me a big, big hug'. I would fairly make your bones crack. When must I come to see you?

"Miss Genie wrote me that she did not feel able to undertake to get up an entertainment at the close of the session but you can say to her that if she would like for you boys to have a dialogue at the time I would drill you for it. Tell her I would do it to help and please her and that if there be any good reason why it would be better not to have it I hope she will not hesitate to say so. It would be some trouble to me to do so but I would do it if she desired it.

"We have been having delightful cakes and broiled shad since you left and I have longed to have you near me so that I could give you a good portion. Never mind; two months and I will have you near all the time. Heaven speed the day.

"Above all, my dear Coleman, be honest and truthful. Do nothing that you would be ashamed to tell me. I want your face to beam with the light of a pure heart. Pray often for God to be your helper. Do not forget the Word of God.

"Your Loving Friend,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

He had another amusing experience with Mr. Moody which was followed by a delightful sequel. He gave Mr. Moody an imperious invitation one day saying:

"Mr. Moody, in these meetings, I am your humble servant, but I am a servant with a favor to ask."

"Say on" said the evangelist.

"I want you to take breakfast with me and I want you to do so whether you desire to do so or not," said Dr. Hatcher. Mr. Moody replied:

Digitized by Google

"I want to come and I will, but I will go to but one other place except your house; I will come to you on the morning of the last day of the meeting and I would not have you think that it will be a strain to accept your kindness. I ask you not to mention the engagement."

He then goes on to relate how during the course of the meetings the breakfast idea kept bobbing up in Mr. Moody's illustrations.

"One of Mr. Moody's favorite figures of the gospel," he writes "was that of a feast or a supper. Four different times he caught me up for an illustration and always began by saying: 'Suppose my friend, Dr. Hatcher, should invite me to his house to breakfast' each time giving a different turn to the ending of the sentence. The frequency of his supposition caught the crowd towards the last, and particularly the preachers, and brought upon me quite a shower of facetious bantering. One friend came forward and said that truly of all men I was the most inhospitable, that Mr. Moody evidently hankered after one of my breakfasts and that it was outright cruelty on my part not to take the hint."

My mother writes me about the "Moody Breakfast":

"I can't tell you how sorry I was that you were not at the breakfast this morning. It was surely a royal one. That seemed to be the verdict of those present. Dr. Landrum and Tudor stopped afterwards to get the Menu for their wives and complimented it very extravagantly. To Orie belonged most of the credit. She has such a systematic and orderly way of doing things that she seems to have only to will in order that things may move under her bidding. David [the sexton] and John did their part finely as waiters. Strawberries, oysters and chicken were among the good things. Governor O'Ferrall came up promptly at eight o'clock in his carriage; and soon afterwards Mr. Moody and son came. Mr. Thornhill, Landrum, Tudor, and Puryear were here. . . The small talk abounded mostly stories of course. The Governor is pleasant and full of good stories. He and Mr. Moody vied with each other and thoroughly enjoyed each other, I think. The only set back to it all was that you and Kate were not present.

"I found a pretty little book, 'Gift of Love,' lying on the

Digitized by Google

table, with my name in it, from Mr. Moody. It was so delicately done. I certainly appreciated it. It was a verse of scripture and poetry for every day in the year."

At a later time he thus referred to the occasion:

"I invited a number of friends, several of them, famous for good cheer and social grace. Among them was the governor of Virginia and another, a most brilliant writer and scholar, and all of them congenial by reason of the catholicity of their tastes, their honor, their rich intelligence, and their attractive personalities. I have not seen in all of my days a happier company.

"The governor carried a yankee bullet hid away somewhere, where it neither troubled him, nor anybody else, and was an unmatched story teller. My literary friend was a philosopher and his epigrams, struck off spontaneously, were charged with his wit and brimming with good humor. The hours partook of the festive joy and flew joyously away. Mr. Moody was the master of it all. He told his stories in simplest fashion and made his point every time and with boundless relish he enjoyed the happy comradeship of the morning."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX

1894—1896

Y. M. C. A. COLLECTION. EAGERNESS TO WIN. CHRISTIAN UNION. RICHMOND COLLEGE. TOPICAL NOTES. PURCHASE OF HOME AT FORK UNION. CHICAGO ADDRESS.

Within a few weeks he is called upon to play three very different roles, two of which have just been recited. At first he was the pastor, greeting his great church as they gather for the first time in their splendid new auditorium. Next, he stood as first assistant in a vast, evangelistic campaign, at the head of varied committees, seeking to keep the track clear and the machinery in good running order for Mr. Moody to do his great work. And now no sooner do the Moody meetings close than we see him standing before an assembly of the chief business men of Richmond, as well as the leading pastors of the different denominations, including the Jewish Rabbi and those of no Denominations, seeking to stimulate them to large giving in behalf of the Young Men's Christian Association of the city. These citizens had been summoned together in the interest of the Association and he had been asked to present the appeal. As he called for their subscriptions he said:

"I warn you against putting off until tomorrow what can be done today. Tomorrow is always a day of backsliding in the matter of subscriptions. The ministers will do their part. They are kept low, in the matter of funds, but they are good business men nevertheless. They manage to support first class establishments on fourth class salaries and never brake."

Digitized by Google

"He gave $100 to the Y. M. C. A." writes my mother "too much, but it is scattered over four years." His gift for taking collections must have cost him thousands of dollars and yet his own contributions came cheerfully and without constraint.

"I had quite a time taking the collections for the Y. M. C. A. last week" he writes "and I rather enjoyed it. There were two citizens' meetings for that purpose and I took the two pulls for the money both times. It brought me before lots of people, who never knew me before, and they got many a laugh at my little sallies of humor. It made me friends.

"I am wofully fagged out. I slipped out to Bob's Friday, but I was so very much exhausted that the relaxation positively made me sick. Still I had a charming visit."

He promised to lecture at his Grace Street Church for the benefit of the Y. M. C. A. at the College.

"I dread it too much to speak of" he writes. "I am not sure of my crowd but I am willing to be slaughtered to show that I am of an obliging turn of mind."

His next letter shows one of his signal traits,—his eagerness to win. He attended the all-day picnic of the pastors at Forest Hill Park and writes about his contest with one of his choice friends, Dr. L———, who was also one of the Richmond pastors:

"We had a ripping time this afternoon. There was a big turn-out and quoits went high. Bob and I won the championship. It went awfully hard with L——— and he fought hard to escape the humiliation of his defeat but we ran him into the very ground."

He was driving Mr. Slaughter in his buggy one day when he found himself in the street with several conveyances all of which seemed anxious to drive on past him. He whipped up his horse and sent him speeding ahead at a lively clip.

"Doctor" said Mr. Slaughter somewhat facetiously "you are not going to race out here on the street are you?" "I tell you, Slaughter" he replied, as he kept his eye on his horse's pace and his hand on his whip, "It is a part of my nature always to want to keep ahead."

Digitized by Google

He writes again on April, 1st:

"RICHMOND, VA., April 1st.

"MY DEAR ELDRIDGE,—I greet you again. How are you this dismal morning? At this monent—nine to the second—I venture to imagine that your head is wrapped in several blankets and that you are still in the land of troubled dreams. Not so with your illustrious father. True he had eight services yesterday and did not touch his pillow until after eleven last night; but here he is in all his pristine splendor, so to speak, but with a lot unregulated aches and ailments floating through his body.

"I am preparing an article on Dr. Broadus which I am to read for the Preacher's Conference next Monday and then give it to the Herald.

"Yours as usual, mistakes and all."

In this article on Dr. John A. Broadus, he said:

"Great men deserve to be well treated in this world, for they are rare. When all apparent greatness is brushed away and only the actual great are left they make a small company."

In referring to Dr. Broadus' oration at Richmond College, on "Demosthenes" he said:

"It was the supreme effort of a giant. . . He threw the light of all ages upon the Athenian orator, until he glowed with a majestic light and the enchanted and enraptured audience hastened away to buy the orations of the peerless Athenian and to find when they attempted to read them that they were dulness itself, as compared with Broadus. Indeed it was Broadus, and not Demosthenes, that they went out to look for.

"All great men are artists. Many glorify Patrick Henry as the 'forest born' orator and think of him as a fountain of rich and unstudied eloquence. Truly, he was an orator and may have been forest born, but he was an expert in composition and public speech. . . . Art without genius makes the dullard; without earnestness makes the actor; without sincerity, makes the hypocrite; when allowed to play the mistress, genius debases it, but, when made its slave, will lead to greatness.

"Broadus, with his course finished and his crown won, is more to us than ever he was in the days of his flesh. He will be yet more to us when we see him again."

Digitized by Google

In June he writes: "I am so fat in these latter days that the heat has a large margin to work on and it does its business quite faithfully." At the close of one of his hot days he had a visitor of whom he draws the following sketch:

"He rang the bell while we were having our evening glass of cold tea, and expressed a desire to look upon the beauty of our countenance, being a dear friend of ours. For comfort he preferred to sit on the porch and there we found him. He was very stylish. Indeed we were sorry that we had not changed our collar and coat to meet him. He gave us a great welcome, so to speak, and spoke with a swelling abandon of the many times that we had met, although we could not recall any of our former meetings. He was dressed immensely, and what bore us to the earth was his side whiskers. There is a majesty in side whiskers that gets us every time. It gives a tone and grandeur to a man—we mean the possesssion of side whiskers, that commands our universal respect. He was just from Boston, and intended going to his home today, but important news required him to go to Kentucky at once. He had money to get home, but not enough to get to Kentucky. He had called on a friend in the city who would have shed dew drops of joy to lend him all the money he could dispose of, but unluckily, the said friend was beyond the city limits, (as we wished that moment we were), and so he had to presume on our acquaintance to request a favor. That was a solemn moment in our earthly career and we shook visibly. The side whiskers overawed us, and there was silence for some time. We were thinking of that mysterious bourne from which no borrowed money returns, when he snapped at us in a contemptuous way, which moved our angry passions. We grew stronger and refused. We were proud of our courage and felt heroic when the side whiskers stalked loftily and scornfully away, and we were free once more. No man with side whiskers need ask charity of us."

He returned to Richmond, in September, after his vacation travels and labors, and he was made happy, a few days later, by the safe return of his wife and his daughter, Orie from their European trip. A Reception at the church was tendered his wife. Dr. Landrum made an address to her on behalf of the ladies to which Dr. Hatcher responded.

Digitized by Google

"At the foot of the table" writes my mother "was a handsome white cake with "J. S. H." [Jennie Snead Hatcher] on it. Probably it was the happiest occasion since the silver wedding.

"Your father asked me when he returned home if I felt 'duly inflated'. I told him I thought so."

His wife was greatly beloved in the church. She always showed keen interest in the general work of the church and, although carrying the burdens of a large household, yet she found time to participate in many of the church enterprises. In addition to all this she was an active factor in the denominational work that was done by the Baptist women of the city and state.

"Why do you not adopt special hours for visitors?" some one asked him. "I cannot do that" he replied. "My study door must swing open to any who desire to come."

"This" writes his wife "was one of the reasons why he hied himself away into the country so frequently."

"Your father braved the elements" she writes on Sept. 27th "and went to the study (on Thursday night) to get ready for Sunday, the loafers and axe-grinders having robbed him of much of his mornings this week. It does seem as if ministers ought to have some retreat away from the out-siders to prepare their sermons. Nobody excuses a poor sermon even when the preparation has to be made under difficulties.

"The girls and Coleman are studying in the dining room. The latter has begun school at McGuire's."

"Yesterday was a roaring day at Old Grace Street" he writes on Oct. 15th "The crowds were prodigious. Of course the strangers were numerous. Last night there was a flood of them. The silent brethren who rarely say words of cheer for the preacher, actually got noisy yesterday about my sermons. In the morning my theme was 'The Religious Awakening at Samaria, and at night, 'The Trembling King.' "

He makes his usual annual round of visits to his members. He writes:

"I am getting up into the fifth hundred of my members visiting, since I got home five weeks tonight. How is that for an old gent of my style?"

Digitized by Google

He urges me to spend earnest work on addresses which I have to deliver on special occasions.

"You must begin quietly and carefully to amass material for such work. You must work over your stuff again and again. My lecture on the Dance consumed weeks of my time. I spent hours on sentences."

On Sunday, November 12th, he made a deliverance on the vexed subject of "the union of all christian Denominations." The sermon was printed in full in the Dispatch. He began by saying that he believed that if all christians should harmoniously agree and cordially unite in one body that it "would be the most sublime and glorious event that could occur on the earth—next to the advent of the Son of God—and would do more than all else to hasten that day." And then he adds:

"If I could find any one thing in the distinctive doctrines of the Baptists, which stood in the way of the union of all christians on a Bible basis I would discard it instantly and I hope that the Baptists will stand in the forefront of the movement for the unification of the Lord's hosts on the earth.

"This I say from the bottom of my heart. But let us understand that this is a vast and far reaching question. It comes to us with the entanglements of the ages upon it. It has to fight the prejudices of centuries. Bigotry, ecclesiastical pride, political influence, social intolerance and racial hatred are bound hand in hand against this movement. Those who think that it will be easy to bring about christian union have never looked beneath the surface of the question. Those who embark upon this undertaking have need to pray for the faith that removes mountains.

"It is easy for a gushing liberalist, charged with sweet phrases and a melting manner, to whip an impulsive crowd into a momentary craze for union, but let some sharp-tongued critic begin to assail the favorite dogmas of those who are present, and the foaming tide of enthusiasm will fade as the morning cloud."

He then proceeds to mention some of the vain plans for bringing about such union.

Digitized by Google

"One plan is to rub out all denominational lines and allow all christians to come in bringing with them all their peculiar doctrines and their methods of work. That would be 'union without unity'. Another scheme is for us to get all christian people to gather at the gate of some vast camp, unload all of their distinguishing views, and agree not to believe anything that any one else cannot believe and not to insist on what they believe.

"Still another plan is to rally the scattered friends of God back to union on some one of the many creeds as held by the sects."

He suggested no plan for bringing about the union, "but" said he "there is much that Christians can do to forward the movement for union.

"1. We should strive honestly to make sectarianism odious.
"2. We must cultivate interdenominational charity.
"3. We must labor to bring the christian world to understand that the only possible basis for christian union is the authority of the Word of God."

November 20th, finds him at Nashville, Tenn., aiding Dr. Frost in meetings at the First Baptist Church.

"We are like an army" he writes from Nashville "lining up for battle, throwing out our heavy skirmish lines and seeking to get other forces brought forward and put in position before the general onset."

Again he writes:

"Thus far I have dealt only with Christians. It is a fierce battle which we are fighting."

The campaign, however, was crowned with victory. He writes:

"In many respects the meeting has been equal to the best I have ever seen. . . I think that a new era is dawning for the church."

He was subjected to a trying experience at this time. An

Digitized by Google

election was to take place at Richmond College, of whose Board of Trustees, he was a member. There was a lining up of the friends of the candidate and of those opposed to him and among the latter were some of Dr. Hatcher's prominent church members. The lines were closely drawn and the agitation was very intense. As both pastor and Trustee, he found himself in a peculiarly delicate and puzzling position, and while his desire for the candidate's election was strong, yet he determined to take no active part in the contest. But it was known that he had been for several years a very helpful friend of the candidate and it was concluded that he had championed his Cause.

"It has gone out" he writes "that I was the leading spirit in the movement and quite a number are mad with me. But I have a motto which comforts me often: 'He that believeth shall not make haste'. I will keep silent and let the heathen rage for a season and then I will tell the facts. But I have no thought of running around to explain my action in the case. I regret that several. . . have gone wild over the thing and the worst in the lot is. . . It distresses me deeply. But keep still and wait. Things will come out all right."

The above text "He that believeth shall not make haste" was one of his guiding stars. Many were the times he quoted it, as being one of his life mottoes. In the times of strain, or opposition, when tempted to act impulsively, he would cool his brow with the above words and go peacefully about his work.

He threw open his home on January 1st, for a New Year's Reception to his church members and friends. He writes:

"My New Year's Reception threatens to take the town. It is to cast all others in the thickening shadows of oblivion. It is to bring all folks together as far as possible. It will pull the sacred dust out of 'Brer Hatcher's' vest pocket, but never mind about that."

He began at this time a work which he continued until the end of his life,—that of writing the "Topical Notes" for "The

Digitized by Google

Baptist Teacher", which was read each week by nearly all the Baptist Sunday School teachers in the South. There were three interesting facts connected with his writing these "Lessons." In the first place, the only Bible helps he ever used in his writings was a little red book which he carried often in his pocket—called "Pell's Notes"—containing the Scripture for each Sunday with a few brief notes. In the second place, he always had his "Lessons" at the Nashville office before the appointed date. Dr. VanNess, editor of the Teacher, said that while he had many bothers with other writers, yet Dr. Hatcher was his delight, in that he never disappointed, nor delayed, him in the matter of his "Notes".

This was remarkable, in view of the irregular life which he lived. On trains, in depots, in homes of others,—in all manner of places—was this writing done, and yet the "Lessons" never jumped the track nor missed their schedule time.

In the third place, in writing these notes, he would never correct them after the first writing. Many were the times when he would call out to some member of the family:

"————, I want you to help me on my lessons" which meant that that person would write them out for him at his dictation. He would always ask the amanuensis to read them over after writing them,—in order to note any clerical errors that may have occured; but the sentences that he had first called out always stood. So wonderfully had he, in his early ministry, gathered a choice vocabularly and brought his mental forces under control that now he was reaping the reward and in his composition his first word was generally his best word. In this way his preparation of his lessons consumed the minimum of his time, and he was enabled through the remaining years of a life that was crowded with uncountable tasks to have his matter for the Sunday School Board on their desk, each month, waiting for the stroke of the clock. The writing of these Lessons gave him keen pleasure in the grateful words that were ever reaching him from his readers all over the South. These grateful words would come to him in his letters, in greetings

Digitized by Google

on the train, at Conventions and in his visits to Churches. He also drew rich comfort from the Bible study which he was compelled to do in connection with his writing of the Lessons.

A few paragraphs from his "Notes" are here quoted. They are taken from some "Teachers" that happen to be near at hand. If all his "Notes" should be published they would make a large volume.

"The true fame of the preacher is to be known more by the place he has in the heart, than in the eye, of the public."

"A COMPACT AUDIENCE. It is hard to stir a scattered audience."

"THE PASTOR. He who can put his members to work in the Master's service is the best doctor that many of them could have."

"THE DEAD LINE. There is no dead line for those who burn with the desire to work till Jesus comes."

"There is hope for a man who is fond of those who are candid enough to tell him of his errors and faults."

"The Lord never takes his servants at their worst."

"JONAH AND THE GOSPEL. There is almost enough gospel in Jonah and his Book to save the world."

"If a man will pull his house down on himself and be buried in the ruins, let him, at least, have pity enough to let his children have a chance to get out."

"Daniel kept open house for the Lord, opening his windows towards Jerusalem."

"MERCY'S SWEET WAY. Mercy comes not as the storm, but comes with silent feet, and comes to heal and bind up broken hearts; its touch is as soft as the evening light; its ointment is fragrant and refreshing; it has no ruffled brow, no impatient word; no rebukes for the past, no threats for the future."

His burdens, at this time, were grievously heavy, but he kept steadfastly to his work. On his twentieth Anniversary his church insisted upon making the morning service an occasion for doing him honor and Prof. Harris and others spoke words of praise, and on the next night the auditorium was thronged at a reception given the pastor and his wife by the church members and the Richmond friends. Dr. Landrum presided and the various pastors spoke.

Digitized by Google

He indulged in a commercial transaction at this time that was destined to open a new and large chapter in his life. He purchased a small tract of land at Fork Union, Va., upon which to erect a Summer home. He expected that this home would, among other things, answer the question that lifted its head every year in the family circle, viz., "Where shall we go this Summer?"

He gave a young preacher a word of counsel at this time that showed one of his traits of leadership. The young man wanted his church to make extended improvements on their newly purchased building. He wrote the young minister that he had better not force the entire issue at once, "If you can get your folks to start in on the thing" he writes "their interest will grow and you can lead them by degrees. But your demand for all at once will scare them and combine the timid and conservative against you. Talk to them about the things that must necessarily be done. Let them get the fever of improvement in their blood and other things can be worked up by taking them one at a time. A flank movement is far better than a front attack."

"I had my preachers' Supper last night" he writes to Elizabeth "Willingham, Mullins, Wright and Nelson, with their wives, constituted the party, Mr. and Mrs. Boatwright not being able to come. The supper was quite elegant and the evening went off like a golden charm.

"As Ever Your Old Stick of a Papa,
"W. E. H."

His daughter Kate was married on June 15th, to Prof. C. L. DeMott and he took great interest in arranging the wedding programme which was a singularly beautiful one. The ceremony was performed by him in the church.

He could crowd into short space much valuable advice. To a minister, in another city, he suggests a plan for raising the money for a new building:

"Strike,—say for $10.000, Let no man tell how much he is going to give (except to you and the committee), until you

Digitized by Google

have a roaring mass meeting to take the subscriptions. That meeting ought to be the biggest thing you ever heard of and, in the name of the Lord, you must sweep the deck and get the bottom dollar."

Regarding his Sunday work of January 26th, he writes; "My sermon in the morning went off well, but at night I wept over Jerusalem in a manner which was enough to disgust the Jews." On the following Sunday afternoon he writes: "I have an unpronounceable Armenian to preach for me tonight."

He went by invitation, to Chicago, to address the Baptist Social Union of that city, and on his way he dropped me a line from Cincinnatti saying: "Here I am on my way to the slaughter house—only I will have to open my mouth before the shearers." His Chicago audience included the pick and cream of the Baptist ministry and laity of that city, with a goodly number of representatives from the University of Chicago. As he arose to deliver his address there was a hearty clapping of hands.

"You do well" he began "to prefix your applause to the impending address. You show your courtesy and dispose of a responsibility. You are like the farmer who prepaid his annual debt to heaven by saying grace when he killed hogs. Let fate do its worse with my performance tonight, you are safe and I am not in despair, for, when I get home, I can, at least, comfort my few surviving friends by declaring that my address was received with great manual dexterity."

His subject was "Charity" and was a plea for optimism in dealing with human character. He did not sound the doleful note, "Alas, the rarity of christian charity under the sun." And yet he made it plain that charity deserves a much higher place in the ranks of Christian virtues. He said:

"If the family of Adam—that is, of course, if we can be charitable enough to believe that the old gentleman had a family—(laughter) would hit the mark every fire and keep out of mischief, charity would have to close doors."

Speaking of certain pugilistic Baptists he said:

Digitized by Google

"They would rather track a heretic into the wilderness than to bring a prodigal home; they would fire a Bodleian library to rid the world of a bad book."

"It is the province of charity" said he, "to run a line through every character and put the agreeable and the good on one side, and the objectionable on the other. After this division, charity takes the weak and offensive, wraps it in its own mantle and hides it. With the evil thus disposed of charity bids us lay hold of what is left and enter into relations with that."

In these words he unconsciously was stating one of his own guiding principles. That which made him so entertaining to men—Dr. W. W. Landrum said he considered him the most entertaining man in the Baptist ministry of his day—was because people, as a rule, were so entertaining to him. His eye burrowed down into an individual until it rested upon what was human,—yea upon what was noble in the individual, and he conducted his negotiations with that noble part.

"This is the only way" said he, "that some men get along with their wives,—by making an allowance and some wives insist on very heavy and frequent allowances and this is certainly the only way in which wives can make the trip with their husbands. They have to divide up their husbands and after locking up the mean and intolerable portions of them seek to keep house with what is left,—the difficulty being in many cases that when they have stored away all the meanness of their husbands there is nothing left and they are practically left widows."

No one believed more firmly in the time honored doctrine of the Bible's inspiration than did he and yet he did not believe in making a bon-fire of the heretics. His address therefore was partly a plea for the higher critic.

"I was lately on a train" said he "which stopped bodily out in an open field. I got out and strolled up to the engine to see what I could see. I found a wonderfully greasy old fellow under the engine, creeping around and cracking the engine here and there with a truly malicious hammer. I asked the fireman to stop the man lest he should break the engine, telling him that I had engaged it to take me up the

Digitized by Google

country. He consoled me by explaining that he was merely trying the engine to see if it was all right. He said if it was out of order, it would be well for me to know it, and if it was all right, it would not hurt me to know it. I went silently back into the car.

"It is hard to believe that the critic is anxious to destroy the Bible. If he is, he cannot do it. I have not the smallest fear that he can, but if he can, let him do it. What do I want with a Bible that a critic could upset. If his investigations only go to confirm my faith in the Bible, then he is my benefactor, and it may be that if I will treat him with charity, while he is shaking and testing the rock of my hope, he may come to believe in the foundation and get on it. At any rate we must give him time."

"They listened" said he "with bright and responsive kindness as I, for forty five minutes, spoke on charity as a working principle and gave the principle free permission to get in its work on the victim of the evening."

In writing about it he said: "I had the trip of my life."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXX

1896—1897

A SHOCKING DISASTER. ARDUOUS BUILDING CAMPAIGN. REVIVAL MEETING IN GRANVILLE, OHIO.

Royal days were these which came to him during this Winter of 1896. With a magnificent church building, with a church membership united and devoted, with multitudes flocking every Sunday to his ministry, with his own church work rich in its fruitage, he walked the heights. The city of Richmond held him in high esteem, his services were in wide demand, and loving greetings were accorded him wherever he went. His long Church-building campaign had bent his shoulders for a while, but all that was over, and there seemed to stretch before him many years of glorious ministry in his new building. How little he dreamed of the catastrophe that was impending. Dr. L. C. Broughton was aiding him in meetings at Grace Street.

Tuesday, February 25, dawned brightly and he went forth to its tasks with a light step. There was, however, one melancholy service that he had to render that day and that was to preach the funeral, at three o'clock, of one of his deacons, A. L. Shepherd. He went to his church at two o'clock to prepare for the funeral. As he enterred the building he noticed that it was full of smoke and he hunted up the sexton and said to him: "David, the house is full of smoke; open the windows and ventilate the building."

"There is something the matter with the flues," the sexton replied, as he went off to attend to the matter. In a few seconds he came running back and shouted:

"Good Lord, Doctor; the wood in the engine room is on fire; but I can put it out."

Digitized by Google

Dr. Hatcher ran out of the building to get some negroes to help him. He next ran across the street to the corner drug store and said: "My church is burning; send in the alarm."

He hurried back to the church and the men said: "We can put it out, Doctor; You need not worry."

As they said this he noticed smoke issuing from a recess above the engine room. In a few seconds the rumble and clang of the approaching fire engines were heard; in a few seconds more the anxious pastor expected to see the welcome stream of water pouring upon the flames,—when suddenly a tongue of fire was seen to leap into the main auditorium. The engines dashed up to the building and the firemen wildly unrolled the hose, but as the chief saw the flames now sweeping like mad demons through the large audience room he said to the pastor:

"Doctor, the building is doomed. It is impossible to save it."

Some one standing by saw a tear come in his eye as the chief made that announcement. "Will not some one break into my study and save some of my books and papers," he asked, and the reply was:

"Doctor Hatcher, it is impossible. It would be dangerous for any one to attempt to enter the study, inasmuch as the fire started right under that room."

From every direction the fire engines still kept coming; the men seemed mad as they leaped from their engines, but they were too late; by this time the church was a roaring furnace.

And there stood the pastor gazing upon the magnificent structure that had been his joy and pride, that had cost him years of toil and sacrifice, there before his eyes it was now melting away. A reporter rushed up to him with his many questions but got no answer; so overwhelmed was he that he could not talk. Suddenly he felt two big strong arms around him, and a kindly voice said:

"Never mind, Doctor; we will build another and you may call on me for $500".

He turned around and looked into the face of Capt. Chas.

Digitized by Google

H. Eppes. One of his Sunday School scholars, the daughter of his beloved deacon, E. M. Foster, caught hold of him and, with an imperious pull and tone of voice, said: "Come around home, Doctor Hatcher," and together they went to the Foster home near the church. It was then nearly time for the funeral of his beloved deacon, Mrs. Foster, who had already heard the dreadful news, saw him coming.

"Make a strong cup of coffee at once" she shouted to the cook and then went to the door to greet him. As he entered the house he found the family crying and heartbroken. In a little while he was seated at the table drinking the coffee. Suddenly he lifted up the cup and brought it down with a bang upon the table. "I have always wondered" said Mrs. Foster, "why that cup did not break. He brought it down with such force, as he said with great earnestness: "The old house is gone, but we will build another." From that moment he seemed a new man. It was at that time that I found him.

I was at home in Richmond on a visit that day, and at about two o'clock the fire bell rang and as we looked down Grace Street we noticed heavy volumes of smoke, and it was not very far away. I hurried down the street. The smoke appeared dangerously near the church—on I went, every step increasing my anxiety; from every direction the people were running and the fire bells were sounding and in a few seconds my worst fears were realized. The wind was raging—it seemed to be almost howling,—and the cinders were flying over our head as if driven by a hurricane. From every part of the city, along every street and alley, the crowds were coming; doors and windows of every house seemed open and the inmates of the homes were rushing off towards the burning church, and the ladies, who were not running, were standing at their front gates. The entire city appeared to have but one thought and that was that Grace Street Church was burning.

As I dashed up to the surging throng my first thought was, of course, of my father, but no one could tell where he was. One bit of information hinted at his being then in the roaring

Digitized by Google

building. It was soon learned that he had gone to Mr. Foster's. There, instead of finding him prostrated by the sudden catastrophe, I saw him standing at the mantel talking in calm and bright tones with the family and with others who had come in. It was the case of a soul quickly and completely triumphing over disaster. He knew well what those smoking walls and those heaps of ashes meant,—meant for him and for his church; he had gone through it all in that tragic half hour, and none can tell what he suffered in those moments. But it was over now; it had done its worst for him and he turned his face towards the future. He gave the following order:

"See Dr. Landrum and tell him to open the Second Baptist Church for the funeral. Have notices of the funeral put up where all the people can see it who come to the fire and notify the family to head the procession for the Second Church."

Shortly after that we were in a hack on our way to the funeral at the Second Church. In the sermon not by word or manner did he give any hint of the crisis through which he was passing. It was a woful picture presented by the deacons as they stood around the open grave. From the cemetery we drove back to the church,—or rather to the place where the church was—and as the deacons looked upon the smoking ruins they "cried like babies." In the meantime the whole city seemed excited and full of sympathy for the pastor and his people. The Richmond Dispatch devoted a considerable part of the paper to accounts of the calamity. Its readers were greeted by a large picture of the building in flames and with great headlines, such as

THE CHURCH IN ASHES

Grace Street's Splendid new Building Destroyed Yesterday Afternoon.

The structure a total Wreck.

Only fragments of the walls tell the story of desolation and ruin.

Not a Single Article Saved

The handsome furnishings and Dr. Hatcher's entire Library consumed.

It caused many other Fires.

Digitized by Google

AFTER THE FIRE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

The situation called for a leader and the pastor met the call. That afternoon, with his home surging with sympathetic callers, he talked with his visitors and laid his plans. As he was standing at the front door with some one who was speaking of his very heavy burdens he answered,—in a manner very impressive—"After all, I reckon that a person's worth in this world is in proportion to the burdens that he can carry."

The insurance on the building was only $20,000, which was exactly the amount of indebtedness resting on the church. The fire therefore left them with nothing. "How are you feeling, Doctor?" asked a reporter who called on him that afternoon, and his reply was: "You may say that with a house full of company, two funerals and a marriage this afternoon, I am doing as well as could be hoped." To another reporter who came in he said: "The destruction of my sermons is a serious blow"—and turning to Dr. Landrum who was near by he added with a laugh "I reckon, however, I can get a supply from my friend Dr. Landrum."

He issued in the next morning's paper a call to his church, asking that every member would meet him on the next afternoon, at four o'clock, at the First Presbyterian Church. It is doubtful whether any religious service was ever held in Richmond surpassing that one in dramatic interest. From all over the city on the next afternoon came the members and friends and as they gathered they sat with sad and tearful faces,—and some of the heads were bowed. At the appointed time, a door in the rear of the pulpit opened and Dr. Hatcher entered, accompanied by many brother ministers, including the Jewish Rabbi. As the pastor walked in, facing his members who felt that they were a people without a home, it is not surprising that nearly everybody fell to weeping, but as the pastor walked upon the pulpit he started an old fashioned hymn; his loyal members tried to join, but it was hard to cry and sing at the same time and the cry had the start and the advantage. In one case and another and another the song got the better of the cry and louder and louder rose the hymn,

Digitized by Google

though in many cases the singing and the weeping were hopelessly blended. When the song was ended the pastor came forward and with tearful eyes said:

"I believe I will begin this meeting with a request that all who love the Lord and believe that you can follow him in the darkness as well as in the light will please stand up."

Almost every person in that vast audience arose and after a prayer, Dr. Hatcher said: "Let us sing, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,'" and it was a spectacle indeed to see those Grace Street people, singing through their tears, that hymn of praise. Dr. Kerr, the pastor of the church in which the service was then being held, came forward and said, among other things: "The First Presbyterian church is yours as long and as often as you care to use it. The flames that destroyed your home have made a conflagration of brotherly love that nothing can destroy." The hymn "Blest be the tie that binds," was sung, and Dr. Hatcher said: "I never felt happier than I do now". Then, letting his gaze travel over the great audience, he said slowly:

"On yesterday when the church burned I decided to say to my congregation that if another movement was to be inaugurated to build a church then some one else had better be placed at the head. I have changed my mind however."

"Thank God" said some one.

"If I had not" he said "I would have to go off in some place and die. So sincere and tender and encouraging have been the expressions of sympathy and confidence from all sides that I can do nothing but stand at my post." Then, with a brightening tone, he said: "I thank God that his blessed promises were not burned with the church. I never knew before how much I loved my people nor how much they loved me." He then read a paper which he had after consultation with the deacons prepared. The paper, among other things, suggested the appointment of two committees, one to deal with the matter of a temporary meeting place and the other committee

Digitized by Google

to be a building committee to take in hand the matter of erecting a new structure,.

"And now" said he "I want to ask that all you who think we ought to build another church will stand and join heartily in singing 'How firm a foundation' ". The members came to their feet and the hymn began to roll in power through the building.

"Let us give our pastor the hand" suggested some one "and assure him of our willingness to cooperate with him in the struggle for a new building."

Out into the aisles the people thronged, pressing towards the front and singing as they moved forwards. As they crowded about the pulpit, reaching forth their hands to their pastor, smiling and singing through their tears, they presented a thrilling picture. Rabbi Calish, who was near the pastor on the platform, remarked:

"Dr. Hatcher, this is wonderful. Do your people always rally about you in such a way as that?" "Not always" replied Dr. Hatcher "it takes a fire to bring about such a scene. You know we had a little blaze down at the corner on yesterday and my people have been tried by fire and this is the result."

"Well Doctor" he said "this is one of the most wonderful manifestations upon which I have ever looked."

"Doctor Hatcher" called out Dr. Landrum "I received a surprise this morning. My telephone bell rang several times and when I had listened to what several of my members had to say to me I had $1,000 promised for your new church and here is the pledge."

The next gentleman to arise was the Jewish Rabbi, Dr. Calish:

"Doctor Hatcher," he said "on behalf of our Beth Ahaba Synagogue I take pleasure in tendering to your Grace Street Church their building for all your services and your Sunday School meetings with coal free and lights free for so long a time as you may need or desire it. The destruction of your church is a calamity to every man, woman and child in our city."

Digitized by Google

"Doctor Hatcher," called out Rev. Mr Mercer, pastor of the West View Church "Permit a word from a daughter of Grace Street Church,—West View. We are building a new church and we have already secured $1500 in subscriptions from your Grace Street members but I am authorized to cancel all these subscriptions from our stricken mother church and we will work no further on these subscriptions in Grace Street. In addition to this our little church will give at least $200 to help you rebuild."

"I'll have to break up this meeting" said Dr. Hatcher. "It is too good." Then holding in his hand a batch of telegrams he said: "These are messages of condolence and proffers of aid from good people here and elsewhere." After yet others had offered the use of their buildings to the Grace Street Church he said: "I thought that my people and I were homeless when lo, we have never had so many homes in our lives."

"The gray haired pastor" says the Dispatch "who has labored for nearly 21 years with his flock was more than once during the meetings almost overcome with emotion."
"I almost feel" said Dr. Hatcher "that I ought to apologize for my people and for myself for being so cheerful under such conditions. But we cannot help it so long as we are permitted to feast upon the loving kindness of our friends and brethren."

At the close of the meeting Rabbi Calish said to Dr. Kerr:

"I have heard that there is no power in the name of Jesus and I have often said so myself but I will never say so again, for never in all my life have I seen such an impressive religious demonstration as I have witnessed this afternoon."

The Richmond Dispatch said that the fire seemed to have "touched the purse strings, as well as the heart strings, of every man, woman and child in the city." About fifteen business houses offered to receive offerings for the Church and a list of these houses was published in the paper. Several large stores announced that they would give a certain percentage of their receipts, on a certain day, to the church. The ministers of all Denominations, including the Jewish Rabbi, published

Digitized by Google

a statement declaring that the fire was a city-wide calamity and calling upon all citizens to contribute towards a new building. The president of the Baptist General Association of the State, Dr. T. S. Dunaway, published an appeal suggesting that all the Baptist churches in the state should, on the next Sunday, take a collection for the Grace Street Church. Through many years Grace Street with her pastor had opened her doors and purse to burdened pastors from all parts of the state and now the bread, cast upon the waters, was returning. In the meantime, he called his building committee together and one of their first acts was to present him with a new type writer and a new buggy, one having been burned and the other having been worn out, He remarked goodnaturedly about this double gift that it was not a sentimental thing to do, inasmuch as it was apparent that his people wanted him "to be hustling all over the country and writing to every body."

The revival meetings had been moved to the Second Baptist Church where they continued every night with Dr. Broughton doing the preaching. Several Bibles had been given to Dr. Broughton in return for his own Bibles which had been destroyed in the fire. "I would like for someone to send me a new supply of sermons, for mine were also burned" he facetiously remarked one day, whereupon the janitor, who was standing near him, said: "Dr. Landrum has got a big, black box full of sermons over there—guess he will give you as many of them as you want."

Many such pleasantries were indulged in during the strains and sorrows that followed the fire. Dr. Hatcher's sermons were also burned and one of the deacons said with an assumed tone of satisfaction: "Now that all your old sermons are burned I guess we will have some new ones." "My old sermons were burned up," quickly replied the pastor, "but my capacity for making some more mean sermons was not burned up." He told Dr. Broughton that he knew that when the fire struck his (Broughton's) sermons it was impossible then to stop the flames. "Dr. Broughton rather meanly intimated," says

Digitized by Google

Dr. Hatcher, "that if the fire got into mine, it was the first time they knew what fire was,—or words to that effect."

Grace Street was rich in invitations from other churches to use their buildings. "Our church. . . ." said Dr. Hatcher "worshipped in thirteen different places and one unsophisticated boy touched off the situation with unconscious humor when he said: 'I was converted at the Second Baptist Church, received for Baptism at the First Presbyterian church, baptized at the Calvary Baptist Church and received the right hand of fellowship at the Jewish synagogue.'"

A gentlemen said that the outburst of kindness constituted a new era in the history of christian fellowship. The Grace Street people rejoiced in the kindness of their sister churches and yet their tramp, Sunday by Sunday, from one church to another, in different parts of the city, had its pathetic side.

Two things were decided upon;—one was to erect a temporary Tabernacle and the other to begin, at once, a campaign for a new building.

Looked at in one way, his lot seemed a tragedy. For nearly four years of his life he had carried the burden of a building campaign, struggling first to enter the Sunday School room and later the auditorium of his splendid building and now—not long after he had grasped the fruit of his labors—the building was swept from him by the heartless flames and another long road of church building—this time hard and cheerless—stretched before him. One is tempted to exclaim: "Was it not a mistake for such a large portion of his life to be employed with the mechanical bothers of church building! Multitudes of others, less highly endowed, could erect houses; why should he,—a preacher, a winner of souls,—tie himself to problems of bricks and stone?" But it had to be. He could not disentangle himself from the task. It was a part of his work; and he must do it all. He did not naturally like such building campaigns. He loved to preach and to give himself to the work of the ministry and yet a considerable part of eight of the best years of

Digitized by Google

his life was taken up with planning for money raising, meeting bills, constructing tabernacles and church edifices.

It must not be overlooked, however, that his church building campaigns were a part of his ministry—they were spiritual, as well as material, in their nature. If, in his sermons, it was the man who spoke the loudest, so, in his financial and building undertakings it was the man again that was preaching. His marked individuality expressed itself whether he was in the pulpit, in a croquet game, in a committee meeting, or in conferences with the architect, or the carpenter. His good sense, his humor, his patience, his honesty, his faith, and many other such qualities were ever impressing others as they touched him each day.

The workmen on the building, from the contractor down to the lowest laborer, all knew Dr. Hatcher and while they had no patience with intruders who came poddering around the structure to interfere, or take up their time, yet they always had a glad welcome for the pastor. Their eyes would brighten at his coming. He was so smart, so intelligent, so genuinely interested in each one, talked so much sense to them and seemed to have the entire situation so well in hand that they received him with respect and loved to talk with him. Things were always spicy when he was around and they were put on their mettle to hold up their end in the conversation. The Contractor who did the stone work on the building, Mr. Netherland, became a great friend and admirer of his, and many good natured wrangles and genial discussions they had. It was astonishing to note to what extent he grasped the principles involved in the building operations and how, in all the conferences, he seemed to be the master of the situation.

The building undertaking upon which he was now entering was destined to be much more arduous and exacting than the former one. The movement for the first building had in it a novelty and ardor that was impossible for the second. Such incessant activity in matters material of course left him less time for his studies and sermon-making and for laboring among

Digitized by Google

the weak churches out in the state. The church itself suffered in its spiritual life.

"It looks now" writes my mother "as if he will have to endure that kind of hardship much of his life. The struggle for the old building is not to be compared with the struggle for the new one. It is well that he takes his lot as well as he does and that he has good health."

"I am not getting much money these days," he writes. "But I hear encouraging things here and there, and that keeps my soul from sinking. I have an idea that I can get my people up to thirty thousand dollars, but that will require time,"

"Thirty thousand dollars!" For a people who a few days before this had been worshipping in property worth about $80,000, that sounded almost pathetic. Nearly all offerings that could be expected to come in voluntarily from the outside had been received and there lay before him a grim and lengthy road and none knew better than himself how steep and offtimes lonely it would be. But he pressed on with a song in his heart. On Monday morning he writes:

"I went to Manchester last night and preached to a big crowd. I did not see any trees loaded down with silver apples for my building fund. But it may chance that I may grasp a few reluctant dimes over in that town after awhile.

"Haddon and his friends are to give us a great concert tomorrow night. Every one expects hampers of money as the result except myself. Such things do not realize the popular expectations.

"I have a comforting note from Josh Levering of Baltimore."

At a later time Mr. Levering kindly entertained a group of Baptist laymen at his home. They were presented to Dr. Hatcher who told of the burning of his church and a gift for his church came to him as the result of that social gathering at Mr. Levering's.

He was busy now with plans for his new edifice. His church was worshiping in their temporary tabernacle. He preached in Atlanta and the afternoon newspaper announced on the

Digitized by Google

Bulletin Board at the front that Dr. Hatcher would probably be called to Dr. Hawthorne's church.

On the following Sunday he said to his church that there was not enough money or honor outside of Grace Street church to attract him and that he never expected to leave them, unless he felt that they did not want him.

He was very fond of showing marked attention to special visitors who were stopping for a few days in the city. He would call together his friends that they might, with him, do honor to such visitors and make a little parade over them. For example, he had as guests in his home "the Lathams of Georgia", some of his kins-people on his mother's side. Not only was he said to resemble his mother, who was a Miss Latham, but he said that his brother Harvey inherited the traits of the Hatchers while he took his little stock from the Latham side. Concerning his visitors, he writes on July 6th:

"I gave them on Tuesday night what, by a generous construction, might be called a 'Reception'. Quite a little torrent of people were on hand and they seemed to think that life was worth living."

It was at this time that another link dropped out of the chain of his Richmond friendships; Dr. W. W. Landrum, with whom he had enjoyed royal friendship, accepted a call to Atlanta. In writing of his grief over losing him from Richmond he adds: "But I never loved a tree, or preacher, but what it was the first to fade away, or to accept a call elsewhere, as the case might be." Upon receiving the news that he was a grandfather he writes: "Well your mother has of course notified you of Kate's maternal honors. The subduing dignities of grandfatherhood have caught me at last."

He entered upon his Fall work with heavily laden shoulders,—so much so that he could not visit the Portsmouth Association which he always loved to attend. He wrote me: "And so I did not get to the Portsmouth Association. There were a whole family of new born reasons—a litter of them—for not going. But they are too young to be named."

Digitized by Google

He never flung out his banner as a politician,—in fact, never joined their ranks in any way—and yet he took immense interest in the political campaigns of the country, and there were few spectators who were better informed about the election conflicts raging in the country than was he. On November 3rd, the nation was to cast its vote for president,—Mr. Wm. J. Bryan being one of the candidates. On November 2nd, he writes me:

"I am still of the opinion that the plucky and tireless Nebraskan [Mr. Bryan] will be outvoted by a great electoral majority. If he is victorious tomorrow, then I will be as cheerful a man as ever proved to be a false prophet.

"I feel a great respect for Bryan. He has convictions and is evidently sincere in his utterances. His endurance has been above any thought I ever had of the limits of human activity. He will be a king in defeat. This land will not forget him. My lips have never yet said for whom my vote was to be cast and they are still dumb. But I have a towering scorn for the man who undertakes to put the mark of anarchy on Bryan or the stain of immorality on the farmers. The meanest thing done in this campaign has been the deeds of the bolters, and even Carlisle went to Kentucky to advise the Democrats to vote for Breckinridge."

He loved to work upon boys,—if they were made of responsive material—but sometimes he would strike an impossibility. He would not waste his time on such cases, as a rule, but there was one incorrigible youth at Richmond College in whose behalf he persisted. He had promised the father that he would turn a friendly side towards his boy. He thus writes regarding his experience with him:

"I am much embarrassed by the case. I am most anxious to be a comfort to his father, but the youth has not got the logical element in him. His talent for the unexpected is strong and he finds happiness in being eccentric. He has a touch of resistfulness in his composition which is apt to turn your effort to influence him into a small red flag of defiance. But I am watching and hope to get in my work soon. Keep the folks cheerful and tell them that time is a great physician, though his processes are decidedly slow."

Digitized by Google

At the meeting of the General Association in November he found himself in a spirited and somewhat fiery discussion. One of the ministers attacked the Education Board of which Dr. Hatcher was president, charging that the Board was not careful enough in its selection of young ministers to be aided by the Board in their education. The speaker declared that some of the young men who were admitted were not up to the mark in their qualifications. The attack dropped like a bolt out of an April sky and I have seldom seen him so aroused as on that occasion, but—as on so many occasions— his humor came to his rescue, and also to the rescue of the service. After repelling the attack, stating, among other things, that the Board had to depend largely upon the churches who sent to them these young men with their endorsement, he then let himself and his audience down by a humorous conclusion which ran somewhat as follows:

"And besides, suppose we do sometimes take in some rough and unpromising material. Let us not be surprised at it. I remember that our Lord himself took a lot of young men—twelve, if I remember correctly—whom he would aid in their ministerial training and what was their quality? A mixed lot were they. He had loads of trouble with some of them. Peter was an awkward fellow and I doubt whether he would pass muster before any of our Education Boards. He was wofully rantankerous and gave the Master a world of bother but he did not dismiss him on that account. He saw in him what the critics did not see."

"It was worth coming to Richmond to see Dr. Hatcher" says a gentleman writing in the Herald about the Association. "He was as bouyant as a boy over flowing with vitality, watchful of the comfort of the great host, scarcely taking time to eat, or sleep, and entering into all the exercises with keenest zest."

In introducing the versatile and brilliant Dr. J. B. Gambrell, of Texas, he said: "Prof. Mitchell has spoken on General Education, President Whitsitt on Ministerial Education,—and the Lord only knows what the next speaker will talk about."

Digitized by Google

In December he aids his friend Dr. C. C. Meador of Washington in revival meetings, from which place he writes his daughter Orie as follows:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 3rd, 1896.

"MY DEAR ORIE,—I thought that I would write you while you were in Lynchburg, but laziness triumphed and I didn't. I dare say it was well enough not to write until it would be too late for you to have the care of replying. My life here seems a fraction trivial. I have no service in the day and life seems wasted when I have no duty to drive its spurs in me from morning until night.

"Washington has attempted to be very chummy with me. Invitations to 'stay some' with folks have been various and dinners and lunches have sought me. I have not been overly responsive. I have loved the repose and freedom of my appointed home.

"Washington fairly glitters with Christmas beauties. Now and then I vote my eyes a little chance to look at the windows and a desire burns in me to buy trunks of things to take home. But I speedily remember that I am now working for my building fund and with no out-look for personal chink and I call in my roving eyes and resume my position in Poverty's vale (excuse this feeble flicker of sentiment).

"There are three old maids,—sisters of Mrs. Dr. ————'s—in the house and they are positively charming. I am about to decide that it is better for girls not to marry, but take care of themselves, and take care of their worthless old fathers as well as a certain young Vassar woman of my acquaintance is doing.

"I am belabored to stay over another week in Washington, but I think that my two eyes, by the mercy of the Lord, will see the City of the Seven Hills about 2:30 on Saturday afternoon. I am quite willing to peep into "608" and see how the machine is moving.

"I have defaced many pages with the froth of my thoughts and it is high time that I was doing, at least, one sensible thing—which will be the speedy ending of this sapless production.

"Yours, "W. E. H."

In the next letter he gives a bird's-eye view of his Christmas travels. He was overflowing with happy spirits and scattered pleasure as he swung around the circle:

Digitized by Google

"January 4th, 1897.

"My Dear E,—I had quite a proud week of it. Monday afternoon I careered to Skinquarter [Chesterfield Co.] and held forth in the afternoon to a goodly turn-out of the faithful. Williams dined me with becoming pomp and the Rudds gave me a fine supper. Tuesday morning Williams drove me in state to Tomahawk and I preached at noon to a house nearly full.

"There Winfree took me up and escorted me to his castle where I refreshed myself with a night's rest. Wednesday morning found me at home and at noon that day your mother and I ran up to Gwathmey to a Sunday School display where we were the pets of a grateful community. That night I had my prayer meeting.

"Thursday morning found me enroute for Sterling Heights [his new country home, afterwards called Careby Hall], The youthful Ellis received me with many kindly demonstrations at Bremo and drove me to the Fork under whip and lash. I found that an imposing Christmas dining was under way and Dr. George, his household, Uncle Markell and ever so many others, including odds and ends of the rising generation, were on hand. I found myself immensely tickled,—so to speak, to find myself so much thought of by nice people. I remained until Friday evening and got home to find "608" ablaze with a frail blow-out in honor of our frisky debutantes. I sat up-stairs during the show, sneezed with a newly arrived bad cold, toasted my feet and felt that Christmas was over with Brer Hatcher."

He went to Granville, Ohio., to hold a revival campaign. From Columbus,—while enroute to Granville,—he writes Orie:

"Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 12th, 1897.

"My Dear Orie,—I am now anxiously engaged in choosing a new title for you—one that will adequately set forth your glories as a lunch fixer. At first I thought that Luncheonness would meet the emergency but as I did not wish Society to regard you as an incarnated luncheon of the female persuasion I gave that up. But I have not yet recovered from the feeling of being a very largely incarnated lunch which I had after devouring the excellent viands which you furnished me for my journeying mercies. I have not struck a fitting name. There is an audacious bite to the Ohio atmosphere. I find solitude a rich delight today. It serves to compose me and I trust

Digitized by Google

it will rest my inward forces for the grave and arduous duties which are waiting for me at Granville. I am now going to take a peep at the Ohio Legislature.

"Yours, "W. E. H."

On his arrival at Granville he writes to his two youngest daughters, Edith and Elizabeth:

"I enjoin upon you not to sit up too late. I am going to study the ways of the Ohio girls, and if I find any good points, I will bring them home for family purposes. It is my ambition for you to be such lofty characters that you may be pointed to as examples for others. This you are both capable of, and you must aspire to it. I hope to see you shine in the social circle to which you are to belong. Cultivate that quiet and modest dignity without which no woman is ever truly respected. Be more anxious to say sensible than funny things. Men dread a funny woman and hate a critical woman. A modest wit, which is spontaneous and unconscious and does not furnish its own applause, is beautiful.

"But I must not lecture my young Debs. They are too full of energy and hope to endure solemn doctrine. Be happy and write to me."

Regarding his stopping over at Columbus, he writes:

"I spent yesterday at Columbus. The pastor and one of the deacons of the First Church called on me. They gave me a pleasant shock by telling me that a remark which I made to the pastor last June, when I was out here, had led them to sell their old church, build them a tabernacle and to purchase a lot and begin the erection of a new house. They expect to have the new house ready by next Autumn and desired a promise from me that I would dedicate it for them. I felt glad to know that my words had at least done one good thing."

He referred to the town of Granville—on the day before reaching the town—as "the scene of my impending agony." The words describe his keen solicitude about the approaching meetings. To his daughter Orie he wrote:

"Few know what deep anxieties fill a minister's soul when he begins a work of the kind to which I go. Even the making

Digitized by Google

and preaching of a sermon, on a common occasion, is a strain which few even think of and yet under which every conscientious man suffers and when a man finds him self called to master a great occasion—with varied and countless obstacles in the way—he must desire solitude and get it.

"But let me not be too serious. You might suspect that I have struggles within, and against such self exposures I have ever fought. I know what it is to tread the wine press alone."

He nearly always had pangs and wrestlings of soul at the beginning of his revival campaigns. His evangelistic meetings were battles in which he plotted against the devil's forces, and aimed for a big victory at the final onset. Such a victory—rich and complete—came at Granville. At first the conflict was heavy. On the 22nd he wrote me:

"The leaders of the Devil's host are not yet ready to run up the white flag. I am in great agony about the fate of our work at the University. The interest there is immense, but the opposition, while respectful and good mannered, is hard to subdue. I stay over Sunday and am in for a general charge on the Devil's Towers."

On the 25th he writes to Orie: "Yesterday was thrilling. The ringleaders of sin in the University came out last night." When the end came it was estimated that the number of conversions was about 250 and the closing scenes were pentecostal. But this triumph came only after a hard fought campaign.

"For nearly a week" he writes "I beat the air without a convert, without a tear and with nature's thermometer at about fifteen below zero and the thermometer of grace, a good deal lower. I almost believe that I would have been requested to leave, if there had been enough vitality in the meeting to organize public sentiment on that point."

In his meetings the storm was usually slow in gathering. His greatest meetings contained climaxes when the spiritual forces seemed suddenly to culminate. In the Granville campaign, after the first week of apparently vain effort, he writes: "Tonight was a spiritual cloudburst and shook things

Digitized by Google

to the center. It was the first call that I had made for demonstrations and it was great. The outlook is wonderfully fine and my soul is full of hope. If I am not mistaken the Lord has great things for us in store." When Dr. Hatcher left Granville the president of the University said to him: "Dr. Hatcher our University wishes to present you with some special token of our high appreciation; tell us what it shall be". "Nothing for myself," replied Dr. Hatcher, "but I will mention a gift that I will accept and that is a scholarship, in your University, for a bright needy boy in Virginia. The result was that a Fluvanna County young man, the son of a parents who were struggling with great sacrifices to educate their many boys, went to Denison University for his education, and last session this same young man, now an accomplished christian scholar, was at the head of an institution of learning in Florida.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXI

1897

ADDRESS ON THE "EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY." THOUGHTFULNESS OF OTHERS. VARIED JOURNEYS AND LABORS. REVIVAL MEETINGS AT TOLEDO, OHIO. EXALTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

He took a dip into the metaphysical waters at this time. He delivered an address at Richmond College on the "The Experimental Evidences of Christianity" in which he discussed the subject from the scientific rather than the popular point of view. In his public discourses he did not usually venture into the philosophical field. Not that his thinking was superficial. In fact, in preaching he went to the bottom of his text and of his theme; but he generally chose the simpler and the popular forms of expression. He would compass the subject in his own thinking, would view it in its relations and could have easily clothed his thoughts in scholarly and metaphysical garb, and this he would occasionally do—as in the case of his above mentioned address before the College. But the bulk of his speech was not after this fashion. His audiences were generally cosmopolitan and he selected the simple, and ofttimes pictorial method of address. The consequence was that he was understood by the unlearned and by the children. A little boy, in another city, who had complained that he never liked to listen to his mother's pastor because he could never understand what he was talking about came home one Sunday night after Dr. Hatcher had preached and said "Oh, mother I could understand every word that Dr. Hatcher said" He thus writes: "To study a subject to its core, dig up every-

Digitized by Google

thing about it down to its roots and subject the result to a discriminating study, picking out the salient points, putting it in strong and vital words, having as your governing principle in its delivery the application of its doctrines straight home to all hearts,—that is no light task but that is the preaching that will so impress the people that it will make the children listen."

His Richmond College address showed that he could subject a great theme to a comprehensive analysis and could play the scholar and the scientist. In fact it would be difficult to tell, whether he was greater in brain or in heart. His life was so full of kindness that we are tempted in describing him, to say that he was a man of great soul and to forget that it could be said with equal truth of him that he was a man of great intellect. There was both quickness and poise in his mental activities. His field of vision was clear and large. He had the power of seeing a thing not only in itself but in its wide relations, and his many bright sayings were due to his ability to see relationships which lay beyond the ordinary range of vision. Dr. Masters says "Probably Southern Baptist have not produced a richer personality than his. We are sure that we have not produced one who combined in himself at once more of the elements of intellectual greatness and catholicity in his affections." His mind suffered very little waste by self consciousness, or introspection. It focussed its energies on the subject in hand and worked with singular independence. The reader has been kept waiting at the door of the College address that he might be reminded, in the above digresssion, that this book is the story of a great mind as well as of a great heart.

The College address came in a series of addresses in which Dr. Moses D. Hoge, one of the most distinguished Presbyterian ministers of the South, was one of the speakers. A brilliant audience, drawn from the College circles and from the city of Richmond greeted the speaker of the evening.

"It was the crowning address of his life," writes my mother. "I never knew him to bestow more pains or to deliver a speech bet-

Digitized by Google

ter. He was thoroughly himself, was at ease and had perfect command of his subject. Many of the preachers came up to express themselves very strongly in favor of it. Drs. Mitchell, Nelson, Ryland and Boatwright said to him and to me that it was the best of the series—as far as argument and real thought were concerned. Dr. ———— had more learning and eloquence, Prof. M———— said, but your father's more argument and a better line of treatment—showed more original thinking.

"It produced a great impression. Dr. Ryland sent me some flowers from the platform with a note saying that he sent it in appreciation of his admirable address."

Regarding the address he thus writes me:

"My College performance did not satisfy me by a bow's shot but I atleast got to the end and possibly some thought that I came near never accomplishing that. But I did get through. My audience was not big but the night was sufficiently grim and threatening to explain any empty seats that were around. Of course the regulation handshake and the smile of approval came to time at the close, but I did not apply the thermometer to ascertain the warmth of the congratulations. Men like Mitchell, Boatwright and Winston were frank enough to say that mine was the fairest of the addresses—it recognized the sincerity of the objector and sought to convert him. It treated doubt as a friend and not as an enemy.

"My church surprised me yesterday morning by requesting me to repeat the address in the Tabernacle next Sunday night and I have consented to do so. I think it is intended to make it a sort of high night in our wigwam."

There have been found among his papers three separate manuscripts of this address,—each of them showing his carafulness in preparation. That the reader may gain an idea as to his method of working upon his sentences, I quote here his opening paragraph as it apperared in his three manuscripts.

In the first manuscript:

"The object of this paper is to deal with the experimental evidences of Christianity. It is intended to take the unbeliever into the workshop of the Nazarene and invite him to examine the productions of his skill. It has been prepared with the desire atleast of bringing out the phenomena of the truly christianized soul and subjecting it to critical examination."

Digitized by Google

In the second manuscript:

"Tonight I am to invite this audience to turn their thoughts to the Tree of Life and to study the manner of fruit which it bears. We will visit the workshop of the Nazarene Carpenter and examine the products of his skill. We will arrest those who wear the insignia of the gospel and, putting them on the stand, require them to declare to us what the Lord has done for their souls."

This second paragraph is a distinct advance upon the first. The first is the speech of the scientist. He simply says that his discourse will critically examine "the phenomena of the truly christianized soul." That is sufficient for an audience of scientists. But the speaker will face a different audience and so in the second manuscript the scientist turns artist and uses his brush to paint the same thought, as he asks his audience to look upon the Tree of life and upon the Christian on the witness stand. But even this did not satisfy the speaker and so he brings out his brush again.

In the third manuscript:

"Tonight we are to gaze upon the Tree of Life and observe what manner of fruit it bears. We are to enter the spiritual workshop of the Nazarene and examine the productions of his skill. We must apprehend those who wear the insignia of the Gospel, hale them to the bar and require them to tell what God has done for their souls. In plainer terms we are to invade the secresies—the penetralia—of the christian soul, collect the phenomena of its new life and give to them a candid and critical examination."

He next states the plan of his address:

"First we must fix definitely what we mean by Christianity; next we must ascertain the process by which Christianity enters the soul and finally, and chiefly, we must study the result of the Gospel's entrance into union with the soul and determine its evidential value in favor of the truth of Christianity."

First, he defines Christianity as "a religion (unfolded in the Bible) which reveals God in his majesty, truth and justice;

Digitized by Google

man in his moral and spiritual wreck and peril; Jesus Christ in his compassion, becoming the Sacrifice and Savior of the people. This religion is called Christianity and the history which brings it to us is called the gospel."

Secondly, he considers the process by which the gospel enters the soul:

"The gospel moves upon the soul with the majestic courage of an invading army. It sets itself down at the gateway of the soul and demands admission. But it does not storm the gates and force its way. How then does it get in?"

He declares that it enters the soul in the act of repentance and faith. Repentance he defines as: "a sober and deliberate decision to turn away from all sin and that, out of respect for the will and honor of God."

Faith he defines as: "that edict of the will requiring the gates of the soul to be opened for the admission of the gospel and it is done at the suggestion of the heart."

Thirdly, he considers the evidential value of this christian experience and he proceeds to show that Christianity can stand the most rigid scientific test. He points to the fruits of Christianity as seen in a regenerated heart as proof of the truth of Christianity. Christianity, he says, shows what it is by what it does in the human soul. He next enters the field of christian experience, calls upon christians to tell what God has done for their souls, and this testmony of Christians is the scientific phenomena with which to build up the proof in favor of Christianity. The new heart and life, the new motives, the new ideals, the new spirit, the new joy and love—these, says the speaker, are the scientific data upon which to construct the evidence.

It is true, says the speaker, that the only witnesses to this data are the adherents of the religion but regarding these witnesses he says:

"Rank them as average men and women and gauge their testimony accordingly and remember that the testimony borne by christians as to their inner experiences of the power

Digitized by Google

of the gospel is rendered doubly impressive by its harmony, identity and spontaneity. . . It is testimony from different classes, from various countries, from long separated ages and yet it bears witness to the very same spiritual phenomena. . . In this testimony there is included the testimony of millions who had to repudiate their experiences or seal them with their lives and some of them in moments of fear recanted and were set free and then, with the revived sense of God's saving power, returned to their persecutors, reaffirmed their faith and freely died for their Redeemer."

He then declares that an unregenerate scientist cannot pass upon these spiritual phenomena. He may subject to the microscope his physical material; he may try the experiences of the mind by psycological tests, but he must have the spiritual eye to detect and pass upon spiritual phenomena. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The scientist objects to this.

"'Oh'; says the objector, 'you ask me to be interested in an unknown world. I know nothing of the spiritual world'. True; but your ignorance does not prove that there is no such world. America was long an unknown world and men were actually burned for believing there was such a world. In spite of the unbelief of some men, there is a spiritual world, and some may be burned for not believing it.

"In the spiritual Kingdom the christian is the expert and the scientist is the layman. The christian has been experimenting with the gospel and has tested its principles and has just as much right to claim a hearing from the scientist on religion as the scientist has to claim a hearing from the christian on science. Why should they have strife. They are brethren.

"The Gospel challenges trial. Almost the first public word that fell from Jesus' lips was 'Come and see'. The gospel hands us its records, with its history, its doctrines and principles and asks us to examine them. If a man has a new plough, let him not lecture on ploughing, but let him plough. If a man has a flying machine let him not carry it to an exposition but let him get in and fly and then he may invite others to ride with him. . . Never was a more profound or scientific word ever spoken than that of Jesus when he said that if any man will do his will that he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

Digitized by Google

"I stand tonight as one of the crew on the deck of the old ship of Zion and throw out the gang-board and invite you to come on. She has felt the blow of many a mad wave; she has been tossed by many a gale, but she has never missed a connection, nor lost a passenger. As our fathers used to sing. 'She has landed many thousands and can land as many more.'"

On March 12th my mother writes me:

"Your father has been more than usually concerned about the conversion of the people lately. I see with great satisfaction a great difference in him in his spirit while building this church from what it was in rearing the other one. Then he thought and talked so much about the building. Now he talks little about that and talks as much more about the work the church ought to do. He preached a rousing sermon yesterday morning to the young men about taking the old ones' places—said the number of old ones was so very small—hardly any gray heads.

"Another thing that agitates the mind of '608 W. Grace St.' is 'what shall be the name of our country home?' Careby is the name of the ancestral home of the Hatchers in England. Some say 'Careby Hall'; others say 'Melrose Heights', 'Hatcher Castle', 'Ivy Castle', etc. What say you? Your father likes 'Sterling Heights'; not many others do."

"Careby Hall" was the name finally chosen. He thus writes about his new home:

"I expect to go to Fork Union next Thursday to see the foundation laid for that ever grand villa of which the papers talk so impressively and so impertinently."

His orphan boy, Coleman, was still living in his home and was attending Richmond College. He wrote him from Wake Forest College where he was holding his second revival campaign:

"Dear Coleman,—My heart is full of tenderness for you and I long to see you become a strong and faithful young man. I am sensitively anxious for you to do well. . . I must learn to be more patient with you. . There is much in you to please me and to excite my hope in your future.

"Your faithful friend,

"W. E. Hatcher."

Digitized by Google

With pen and hand and tongue he was busy during these Spring days and while his pastorate claimed him for most of his time yet he was ever and anon running out into the state to perform some ministerial service. Regarding his building campaign, he writes: "The workmen hover around me in a manner which terrifies me unless I can soothe them with a check."

In arranging for his trip on May 5th to Wilmington, N. C., to attend the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention a little incident occured that showed his thoughtfulness of others. He told his daughter to prepare a large luncheon—enough for many persons. He knew that the coaches would be filled with ministers enroute for the Convention and when the lunch hour arrived on the train he opened up his large box of eatables and acted as host for a goodly circle of preachers who "lunched with Dr. Hatcher that day." His thoughtfulness of others showed itself not only in giving pleasure to those around him but also in giving encouragement and comfort. For example, Rev. W. W. Reynolds says that one Summer he made a speech on Home Missions at a district Association when Dr. Hatcher was in the audience. A few days afterwards Mr. Reynolds' father received a letter from Dr. Hatcher telling of his pleasure in hearing his son speak so well on Home Missions at the Association. Mr. Reynolds says the letter was couched in such kindly phrase that it greatly cheered his father. He was returning with a train load of ministers and laymen from the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at——— and one of the brilliant young professors at the ——— Seminary had recently died. It was a great shock to all and Dr. Hatcher engineered a little collection among the delegates in the cars to purchase a watch to present to the stricken widow as a token to her of their deep sympathy. "Oh, that Dr. Hatcher were living; he would know how to console us," said a parent soon after his death. The parent had just had a son and daughter killed in an automobile accident.

He went to Wilmington to the Southern Baptist Convention

Digitized by Google

where he said he was exhausted almost "to the point of collapse" by the heavy denominational burdens that were upon him, chief of which was the "Whitsitt Controversy", which matter will be considered at a later time. He delivered the Commencement Address at Georgetown College in Kentucky the first part of June, his subject being "The Road Builders," One of his striking statements in the address was: "The public highway is the work of the pathfinder brought to perfection."

Mr. Henry Schmelz, of Hampton, writes:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—Of course whatever we may have done or shall do in the future for the Orphanage the privilege of so doing will be attributable and due to you. On second thought I have determined to send the picture [portrait of his wife] to Richmond College in your care."

He was elected at this time to succeed Dr. J. L. M. Curry as president of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College. He went to Brooklyn to speak at the funeral of Dr. F. M. Ellis. In closing his address he looked down upon the coffin that contained the sleeping dust of his beloved friend and in tender tones, which those who heard him will not easily forget, he said: "Good bye, Frank; we'll meet again in the morning."

Later in his life he wrote a book of reminiscences in which the last chapter was entitled "the Home Coming",—which has been pronounced a classic. In this chapter he paints the picture of a plain, little country home at Moseley's Junction, in Chesterfield County and of the joy of the mother every year over the home coming of her railroad boys for the Christmas reunion, and of the immense preparations, by that mother, in the kitchen weeks beforehand for that glad season. I was with him on that day when the old man, Mr. Lloyd Phaup, told us the simple, but thrilling story of the Christmas home coming, as we walked up the track from his little engine house to his home. Several years had now passed since that visit, and the Christmas home coming of those days could never again be repeated.

Digitized by Google

"By the way" he writes me on July 5th "old Lloyd Phaup at Moseley's lost his wife—a fearful loss to him. It occured quite a while ago but a word to him would be balm. It is too hot to visit but you can write consoling notes."

Many were the "consoling notes" which, during his long life, he sent to those in trouble.

"Thousands of things press upon me" he writes his wife on October 4th, and on October 27th, he writes me:

"Here I am happy, poor, in debt and waiting for good weather."

He sets his heart on seeing two young preachers at Roanoke at the meeting of the General Association, and thus writes to one of these (Rev. R. H. Winfree) on Nov. 14th:

"My Peerless Robert,—I am just from Brookneal. Spent two nights with John B. Williams and we fairly talked the buttons off your waistcoat. He longs to see you and is going to Roanoke. There you must be also. I am writing Baker to bulge your pocket with some of Uncle Sam's best loose change. Get into your collar and go. I long to see you.

"Very Lovingly,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

He attended the meeting of the General Association in Roanoke in November and at such meetings he was pulled about by the brethren for all manner of purposes,—to secure his championship for their cause before the Association, to gain his counsel regarding a resolution, or some problem in their pastorate, to engage him for a lecture or a meeting or a dedication; many simply wanted the pleasure of grasping his hand and having an effectionate chat with him. "I am working my soul and body to pieces" he writes his wife from Roanoke. "I start to Ohio this afternoon."

This Ohio trip meant another meeting in that state,— this time at Toledo. He stopped at Granville, the scene of his glorious meetings of the preceeding winter, and preached at the University, "The pleasures of that reunion" he writes "amoun-

Digitized by Google

ted to rapture and the whole morning took on the form of a spontaneous reception."

He began his Toledo meetings with the pastor Dr. Emory W. Hunt and wrote that he commenced with "a mountain of anxiety" on his heart, and on the Sunday he writes: "I was really never is such an agony of concern and anxiety." An interesting climax came to his meetings. Up to Sunday December 7th it had seemed impossible to dislodge the unconverted and so critical seemed the situation that far away in Richmond the Grace Street Church was asked at the Sunday morning service to make special prayer for the meeting in Toledo. That night the following telegram was read to the Grace Street congregation:

"TOLEDO, OHIO, Dec. 7th.
"Thirty conversions this morning—many heads of families.
"Wm. E. Hatcher."

In writing about that Sunday he said: "We had one day of Pentecostal glory in Toledo and the people trembled under the touch of God's finger."

Who can explain the wonderful manifestations in such meetings? It was not the enthusiasm awakened by his sermons. He would ofttimes preach his greatest sermons without such manifestations. In fact, he would discourage mere emotional outbursts. It was the power from Heaven which he always waited for in his meetings,—a power that would show itself among the people and instead of seeking to produce it by his preaching he seemed to feel that until the power came his preaching—even his best—would be unavailing. I have already written of how at the close of the first service in a revival meeting in Chesterfield when his congregation seemed wrought up with great emotion, he let the emotion spend itself rather than avail himself of it. He seemed to think that while that expression of holy feeling was good yet there was something higher and better which had not yet come upon them and which he hoped would come. In speaking about religious sentimen-

Digitized by Google

talism he said: "Sentimentalism is an excess of feeling and the riot of passion. Sentimentalism has played a disastrous part in the christian world. It has filled our churches with a religion of feeling. It has drifted us often to folly and fanaticism. It has made our revivals consist in excitement, our enterprises to depend on our humors and our gifts to hang upon our impulses." Finally in his Toledo meeting the heavenly power came and he thus writes:

"People trembled under the touch of God's finger. A lady and gentlemen, who were present, not members of the church, walked away afterwards, she saying that she felt profoundly and distinctly that the power of God was on the people, and he criticizing the meeting most bitterly and yet confessing that he was compelled to hold to the pew with all his might to keep from going forward. It looked as if at the close of the sermon a holy breeze from the hills of the heavenly Canaan blew down upon the people and the effect was simply indescribable. Almost instantly men and women, many of them heads of families, began to push out into the aisles of the church and to stream down to the front. One gentleman, as if Satan was making his last struggles to hold him—a man known throughout the city and held in deserved esteem—vowed that morning never to take any public stand for Christ and declared that if any one spoke to him he would leave the church never to return. He was about the first to take the offered hand of a friend and come out for his Lord and Redeemer.

"The church stood in awful silence and with faces wet with unwiped tears they saw the sight. From that time we had a new atmosphere. People spoke a new language. They sang with a new fervor; they were clothed with a new strength and found it easy to put aside business or pleasure for the Master's work."

Such was the power for which he waited while he preached and prayed. If I were asked to name one of his greatest contributions to the times in which he lived I would be tempted to say it was his exaltation of the supernatural in revival meetings. His appeal was to the God of battles. His meetings were triumphs of divine grace and monumental witnesses of the fact that in this modern day, as well as in the olden time, the

Digitized by Google

power of God's regenerating grace was at the disposal of his people. It is hardly possible for the human heart to reach much loftier heights of ecstasy than marked some of these "climax" days in his meetings. With mothers and wives rejoicing over the conversion of their sons and husbands; with christians tasting afresh the joys of their heavenly hopes; with salvation flowing like a river in their midst and with the peace of God filling their souls with light and joy—Ah it was a foregleam of heavenly happiness and many were the days in his long life when he stood on such mountain peaks.

He writes an account of his Toledo meetings in the Herald closing with a reference to his return to Richmond from Toledo:

"When on Tuesday morning the frozen souled porter on the sleeper shook me out of my morning repose and ordered me,—as only a porter can,—to 'dress' and I ran up my curtain to get a glimpse of the sacred soil and heard the conductor on the outside cry out 'Ashcake' [a station near Richmond] I felt that I was getting home. That word 'Ashcake' got my exact range. It told of childhood and reminded me of my raising. It quietly lifted me down from the glory of 'dining out' and sobered me up for the impending realities."

He had left a part of his heart in Toledo,— as is seen from the following letter to the Toledo pastor, Dr. E. W. Hunt, which he wrote after he reached home.

"Richmond, Va., Dec. 14th, 1897.

"My Dear Brother Hunt,—I struck Richmond on time and received quite a radiant welcome from my home tribe. I found the weather of the most dismal character, though it is honest weather. It does not practice deceptions on us as the Toledo weather did. It has set up to be bad and is doing it.

"The wedding occurs at 6 P. M. to day and is to be quite imposing. Owing to the cruelty of the trains the bridal pair will depart before the supper is served. I am pleased that the blissful couple will leave me and the supper behind. It is my purpose to keep myself and the supper together so far as it is practicable.

"But nonsense,—I would trade off six marriage suppers for one moment in Ashland Avenue with the loved ones I left there.

Digitized by Google

I called on Dr. Lasher [at a stop over in Cincinnatti] yesterday morning and he gave me a charming welcome. At the pastors' Conference I was reduced to conscious shame by the preposterous manner in which they lionized me. They dragged me out for a speech and I added one more failure to my great record as a failure maker.

"But I was sincerely grateful for such consideration and it must in part have been accorded me in view of the fact that I had been with you. It was delightful to hear the commendatory things said about you. You are making a good name in Ohio and I expect you to keep it up. I did not do my usual amount of sleeping on the train and am today in a limp and frazzled state. Sunday night I was wakeful most of the night and I was not sorry for it gave me the opportunity to call the roll of the converts and how happy I was to find that my memory carried so many of them. Then, too, I turned my thoughts backwards and what troops of the brethren and sisters reappeared before me and I greeted them in spirit over and over again. "At breakfast this morning they drew me into talk about the meeting. My wife suddenly exclaimed: 'Why, how on earth do you remember so many?' I could have said that it was easy to remember those you love.

"Of course I had to describe, with a particularity which a woman would require, you and your domestic treasures and when I finished I think that the impression was that I had been staying with quite a fine family of people.

"But this is enough at this time. You and your church are enshrined in my heart. My thoughts will abide with you.

"Fraternally Yours,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

" P. S.—As I failed to get this letter into the mail, I will exercise a woman's right and add a few other feeble remarks. I had my wedding tonight and it was first class. The occasion was really brilliant and—(excuse me) the fee was $20. After a royal supper I came to my church and had a delightful reception. Great interest was evinced in the Toledo meeting and what pleased me greatly not a word was said as to the economic aspects of my trip. I love for my folks to be tasteful and to know how to do the neat thing."

But there was another member of Dr. Hunt's household that Dr. Hatcher carried in his heart and that was Dr. Hunt's little daughter, Harriet.

Digitized by Google

"It was characteristic of Dr. Hatcher to write this fine letter to my four year old daughter," says Dr. Hunt in sending the letter:

"My Dear Little Harriet,—It hurts me to think that you are 800 big miles away from me. I would just delight to sit by you at the table and give you a few, sly hugs. You were very good to me while I was at your house and I am going to tell my friends about it. Some of these days you may come to Richmond and then I will see if I cannot be good to you. If they have "noodles" at any time you must eat some of them for me.

"I expect you to write to me soon after Christmas and tell me all about Santa's visit and also what he brought you. Tell them at home that they must treat you well, or I will ride up there some pleasant moonlight night and bring you to Richmond. If I had you it would be fine, but as I cannot get you I will love you anyhow. Give 'Uncle' my best regards and also Helen. She is a storming fine girl and she must not forget me.

"Your loving friend,

"Dr. Hatcher."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXII

1898

DR. C. C. MEADOR. THE WHITSITT CONTROVERSY. THE BAPTISTS

The year 1898 found him crowded with varied engagements. They kept him hurrying hither and thither with but little time for studying and consequently his preaching—so his wife thought—suffered under the strain. After writing to me of a "red letter day" which he had at his church on Sunday January, 0th, a day of glorious experiences she continues:

"The effect on the church was marked. Something out of the line has to take place like that in a church every once and a while to get it out of the ruts. Being out of his study so long, he was showing that he was lagging behind in his sermons and I ventured so to indicate to him—I never like to hint to him anything uncomplimentary. I nearly always tell him how I enjoy his preaching and say all the good things I can about the sermon—it pleases him. But I must be just to him. I cannot bear the thought of his not keeping up to high water mark. And so he said he felt he was not getting on well sermonizing and the effort to recover himself brought on this renaissance, so to speak, of last Sunday. It was a great day and I am thankful for it. I dont care to what height a preacher attains, he must study—he must have some new idea each time. One great central thought well illuminated will satisfy the hungry christian."

He went this month for meetings with Dr. Henry Colby at his church in Dayton, Ohio, and at the end of three weeks he writes:

"I have preached between thirty and forty sermons . . The joy has rarely ever been greater to me. The meeting at

Digitized by Google

the First Church has not had the bound and triumphant movement of some that I have seen. It has not accomplished all that we have been praying for but it has achieved wonders."

The following letter from my mother on February 17th, closed with a significant statement,—the significance of which will appear later in this chapter:

"Your father has loads upon loads of Board work on his shoulders—much of it exasperating—so much personalism, favoritism to be combatted at every turn—that it makes it hard, doubly hard, to direct or control affairs. And all that has to be conned, and thought over and over. I hope you will never be so heavily burdened, though I want you to make yourself felt in the denomination by doing helpful work. It takes an iron will and an iron constitution to bear what he has to bear. At this moment he is in conference with Dr. Whitsitt at Ford's. He telegraphed him to meet him there at ten o'clock today.

He spoke at the funeral of a preacher who had shortly before his death watched many days at the dying bedside of his son. He said:

"It seems to me that watching with his boy our brother went so far toward eternity that he never came back. He was never the same man. He caught a glimpse through the gates that opened for his son and his longing heart took one leap and he was gone."

That paragraph contains a picture of death that he seemed fond of. It is seen in the words "took one leap and was gone." He in after years referred to his brother Harvey dying in that fashion and it was the manner in which he himself wished to go. It was not merely the idea of dying suddenly, but far above that was the thought of going with a leap and bound; going straight from the harvest field into the presence of his Master.

He had a sympathetic interest in the colored preachers of the old stripe, and showed it in many ways. He delivered an address before the Baptist Social Union of Philadelphia in the Spring on "The Colored Preacher of ante bellum days."

Digitized by Google

Speaking of Dr. Thornhill of Manchester he writes to me on April 17th:

"I miss him like forty when he is out of town for he is one of my abounding consolations. He is a great fountain of pleasure to me. I am now training Mercer to be one of my consolaters—a Saturday afternoon companion. We too had a long ride in the country yesterday afternoon."

He sought to keep the fires of his old friendships burning. It has been said that friendship is a plant that one must water often and Dr. Sam Johnson declared that a man should keep his friendship in constant repair. He saw a picture in the Herald of one of these old friends, Dr. C. C. Meador,—then the pastor of the Fifth Baptist Church in Washington, D. C., and it pleased him greatly to see the Doctor thus honored. The sight of the face takes his thoughts back to his home in Bedford and he writes in playful fashion of two of his early boyhood experiences with Dr. Meador:

"I was the mill boy, and once each week I carried my sack to the mill where Mr. Meador was the ruling spirit. He seemed a long shot above me, but I fired many questions at him at long range and in time established friendly relations with him.

"It is not quite noble to rake up unpleasant memories and it may be wrong in me to do it; but I had a difficulty with that man Meador in those far away days there among the towering hills of Bedford. He did a thing that I thought ill of at the time and about which I have never been fully reconciled. Those who were around us at the time are now beneath the Bedford sod and, as I cannot call on them to judge between us, I must appeal to the living to say where the wrong was.

"They had a revival at Mount Hermon. Oh, it was simply glorious! I have never heard of such a time as that was to me. Old Father Harris was there in his venerable prime and more than once he came down the aisles with his long shock of snowy hair breaking over his shoulders and streaming in the breezes and his face wet with tears as he told us of Christ and Heaven and besought us to come into the ark. . . It was too much for me. I fled the house and out in the pines made my vow. At a later meeting I went forward for prayer and while sitting

Digitized by Google

by the side of Meador one night I felt the sense of God's forgiving love. Few ruder boys ever knocked at Mercy's gate than I was and few even had cruder notions of what ought to be done with such a blessed secret—even the secret of sins forgiven—than I had. There I sat with a fire in my bones, dropping silent tears, glancing at the new light and beauty on the faces of those who were singing and afterwards trying to hear the sermon. But a burning in my heart constrained me to tell somebody something, though I hardly knew what. There at my side was Meador deeply absorbed in the sermon and little dreaming what God had that night done for me. I touched him and he bent his ear down to me. I said 'I have a secret to tell you; go out with me.' Would you believe it? He would not go. For years I have charged him that he did me ill and I here and now renew the charge against him and I ask the judgment of the court. He may have reasons for his conduct but he has never given them to me. And what reasons could satisfy me.

"But my feeling against him are mollified by the fact that a few weeks after that I had a terrible attack of doubt. It overcast my whole sky and shut off all light. My soul went down into the pit. Despair arose in me. But my day to put my sack on "old Fillie" and go to mill came and away I went taking my sorrows with me. Out of the mill came Meador, as I drove up, smiling as kindly as if he had never done me a wrong in his life. As we strolled into the carding rooms he said: 'You made me very happy the other night.'

"I understood what he meant, but I was in no mood for anybody to be rejoicing over what seemed to be my folly in professing religion. I cut him off in short order by telling him that I had made a mistake, that my hope was dead and that I saw no chance for me.

" 'And can it be' he said 'that the Devil has put you in Doubting Castle so soon? That will never do. Have you cast Christ away? I know he has not cast you away.'

"Before I had a moment to reflect he had brought me face to face once more with Christ; my doubts fled and I found my feet once more on the rock. How easily he did it! What comfort he gave me! He has spent a life time in doing gracious things like that for those who needed him. He is a fountain of comfort. Not yet, old fellow, do I say that I will forgive you for denying me that night. We must have a few more wrangles over that before we get it settled. My feeling on that is still strong; but

Digitized by Google

I trust that it is not of that bitter sort that will cause the gate of heaven to be shut against me or that will forbid our walking arm in arm when we go up to witness the crowning of him who washed us in his own blood."

His shoulders carried at this time the heaviest denominational burden that had ever been laid upon him. A storm was brewing that threatened to disrupt the Southern Baptist Convention and there were many who looked to him to avert, if possible, the storm.

The whole disturbance raged around the head of Dr. Wm. H. Whitsitt the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,—one portion of Southern Baptists clamoring for his resignation and the other portion being equally insistent that he should not resign, and upon Dr. Hatcher had been placed the leadership of the party that was friendly to Dr. Whitsitt. Many months before this time Dr. Whitsitt had written several articles that seemed disparaging to the Baptist position. He had written them as editorials in the "Independent" of New York,—a non-denominational periodical,—the subject about which Dr. Whitsitt wrote having already been under discussion in that paper. Dr. Whitsitt later on—of his own motion,—avowed his authorship of these editorials and at once the battle began. From many sources came complaints that the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary should have published as editorials in a non-denominational paper,—one not sympathetic with Baptists,—articles that seemed unfavorable to the Baptists. But the most vigorous accusations against the Doctor were caused by his statement in the articles that immersion had been "invented in England in 1641". That utterance became to many his unpardonable sin and in a short while Southern Baptists found themselves divided into two camps,—one for and the other against Dr. Whitsitt.

There was in the denomination a certain constituency called "Landmarkers", characterized by some one as the "High Church party" in the Baptist Denomination. They held the doctrine of "historic succession" insisting that there had been a regular

Digitized by Google

and unbroken succession of Baptist churches from the days of the Apostles until the present time. Dr. Whitsitt's articles were a practical denial of their position and consequently the entire ranks of those who were called the Landmarkers seemed to take sides against Dr. Whitsitt. But it was not merely a Landmark issue. In many states there were those who, while not sitting in the Landmark camp, were yet shaking their heads against the Seminary President and thinking that he ought to resign.

On the other hand there were many who did not feel that Dr. Whitsitt's publications in the Independent justified the movement for his overthrow, and they felt that the welfare of the Seminary required them to resist and, if possible to bring to naught this hostile campaign. Dr. Whitsitt's Louisville friends had asked Dr. Hatcher to take charge of the Whitsitt side of the contest. He consented because he felt that large denominational issues were involved and thus he took the lead on one side of a contest which developed into the severest conflict that Southern Baptist Convention had ever known. It was expected that the struggle would culminate at Wilmington, N. C., where the Southern Baptist Convention and the Board of Seminary Trustees were to hold their annual sessions in May.

The responsibilities of his position weighed upon Dr. Hatcher heavily. The president of the Convention, who was one of his best friends,—Judge Haralson,—wrote him shortly before the meeting:

"Those opposed to our Uncle ['Uncle Billy' being the affectionate title given Dr. Whitsitt by the students] are numerous. A majority west of the Mississippi, in Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, a smart sprinkle in Alabama and elsewhere, may be counted as dissatisfied. It is doubtful which side will be in the majority if the test should be made. The Seminary should have the support and confidence of all. We must rescue it from distraction if possible. . . Both bodies (the Convention and the Seminary) are in danger and both need cautious handling."

Digitized by Google

The settlement of the matter lay with the Trustees of the Seminary and it was there that the battle was to be waged and there the vote taken. And yet back of the Board was the larger body, the Convention, and the Board well knew that its action must meet the sentiment of the Convention.

On all hands the reigning question at Wilmington was "What will be done about Dr. Whitsitt? Will his friends be able to hold him in his position, or will the other side compel his resignation?" Dr. Hatcher had no thirst for mere victory and he was not out on the path for any one's scalp. It was a peaceful ending of the agitation for which he yearned. He felt that it would be a disaster for the Seminary for Dr. Whitsitt to be forced to resign under such conditions and he hoped that something could be done in the Board to preserve the integrity of the Seminary Faculty and also the unity of the Convention. Many were the conferences,—by mail and by personal interview—that he held with his lieutenants and sympathizers, and when the Board came together in Wilmington, the day before the meeting of the Convention, he had his plan ready. This plan was for Dr. Whitsitt to make a statement to the Board, defining his position but admitting that he had made a mistake in writing the articles in the Independent, and that then the Board should accept this statement as a satisfactory solution of the entire trouble. He nearly always had his men selected to cooperate with him in bringing his measures before a body; he would have one to present the measure while he would follow with his reinforcements.

The Board convened at Wilmington, and, upon motion, Dr. Whitsitt was invited to appear before them and make his statement. That statement had been written on the preceding night in our room at the hotel. Dr. Hatcher wrote it, with Dr. Whitsitt at his side making whatever suggestions he desired, though scarcely any were necessary inasmuch as he and Dr. Hatcher had thoroughly discussed the matter together. The writing of this statement in our room ran far into the night and on the next day Dr. Whitsitt read his statement to the

Digitized by Google

Board and it was accepted as satisfactory, and Dr. Hatcher was appointed to report the matter to the Convention and this he did that afternoon. The great assembly listened with bated breath and at its close the long pent up storm of suspense and anxiety broke.

"Then occured a demonstration", says a writer "which I never expect to see equalled again on the floor of the Southern Baptist Convention,—if I attend the body until I am old. The delegates moved like a tide towards the front to shake hands with Dr. Whitsitt. Old and young came and many of the older friends of the good president embraced him. . . The great body of christians behaved like children. Dr. Whitsitt was visibly affected."

Everybody appeared happy, and the delegates soon scattered to their different states with the glad thought "the war is over."

But even before the Wilmington Convention melted away a few mutterings of disapproval about the Whitsitt matter were heard; but they created only faint smiles from those on the other side. They did not disturb Dr. Hatcher. He wrote:

"I have heard that there was some firing at Appomattox after Grant and Lee had signed the terms of capitulation and even to this peaceful day we now and then hear the sluggish report of an old army musket; but that does not signify that the war is still going on. . . Possibly many dear brethren on both sides of the Whitsitt tilt went to Wilmington with their guns charged for the battle; but the engagement did not come off. If we hear an occasional shot let us believe that they are simply emptying their guns before returning them to the rack. A few may wear their war clothes and tell large stories as to how they thrashed the other side but that is not war."

But as the months passed the former discontent began to lift its head again and this was intensified by a sentence in Dr. Whitsitt's statement which Dr. Hatcher had read before the Wilmington Convention on the occasion when Dr. Whitsitt was given the great ovation and that was the sentence in which

Digitized by Google

he declared that he had written the Independent articles from a Pedobaptist standpoint. That phrase, "from a Pedobaptist standpoint", seemed to wake the cohorts to battle afresh and the conflict now began to be waged more vigorously than ever. State Associations took the matter up for discussion and the lines were drawn even in district associations and in churches. But Dr. Hatcher kept in touch with his men in the Board of Trustees and sought to hold his lines in tact. He wrote me on April 6th: "The Whitsitt matter is in high shape and I really believe we have the Hessians on the canter." Several days later he wrote me: "Letters are still pouring in about the Whitsitt matter." It ought to be mentioned that the leader of the opposition was Rev. T. T. Eaton, D. D., of Louisville, an eminently popular and able leader. Around him the anti-Whitsitt forces rallied and he led them valiantly. He writes me on March 28, in Norfolk where the next meeting of the Convention is to occur:

"I am anxious to know if you meet with any of the Whitsitt madness in Norfolk at this time. How is Brer ———— [pastor ———— Church] talking these days? It would be a long-lasting pity for us to make a ripping fuss in a town like Norfolk [at the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in May]. If you are certain it would be safe to do it I wish you would ask ———— if he would unite in a quiet effort to keep it out of the Convention. You might say that I was greatly hoping that it might be done in the interest of peace and harmony in Virginia.

"Fraternally, W. E. H."

The newspapers took up the cudgels of war and by the time the next meeting of the Convention was held in Norfolk, Va., the contest had developed into a battle royal. Three or four weeks before the time for the Convention meeting, I received in Norfolk, where I was then pastor, the following letter from him:

"I must have an eternally secret council meeting of some of the Trustees of the Seminary on Wednesday night May 4th. Where can we meet. Fix that for us and report at once."

Digitized by Google

He received a telegram from Dr. Whitsitt requesting a conference at Ford's hotel in Richmond.

The Convention arrived. Warmly waxed the contest in the Board. The pressure against the Whitsitt lines was enormous, but in the Board his friends held their ground and when the Convention closed no unfavorable action had been taken by the Convention or the Board against Dr. Whitsitt. The encounter in the Board was, of course, maintained on the high ground of christian courtesy and mutual respect, each side contending for what they believed to be right. Dr. Hatcher now looked forward to an era of peace. He writes me on May 18th:

"I believe the Whitsitt storm is spent. I get letters of compliment on the outcome but I am too busy to enjoy them."

Out in Kentucky the rumble of the battle was heard afresh, and one day he was overwhelmed with dismay and almost of indignation to read in the papers the announcement of Dr. Whitsitt's resignation,—the very thing, of all others, that he thought was provided against. It occured in connection with the Kentucky state Convention. There a strong pressure was brought to bear upon Doctor Whitsitt; he was urged to resign and this he did, because it seemed to him at the time that worse consequences might ensue if he refused. It threw the Whitsitt camp—so far as Dr. Hatcher and his cohorts were concerned—into bewilderment for the moment, but not into panic.

The Board met to take action upon his resignation. So intense was the public interest in these meetings that the reporters were clamoring for admission, and the doors had to be locked against them. His resignation was accepted to take effect at the end of the next session.

The final day of Dr. Whitsitt's incumbency arrived,—his last day as President, and the last day of the Commencement exercises. It was a memorable day. Dr. Hatcher, his friend, who had championed his cause, had been asked to be present and take part in the closing act. From different parts of Louis-

Digitized by Google

ville that morning the people hastened to the Seminary hall,—but let Dr. Hatcher tell the story:

"The day was preeminently Whitsitt day. The consciousness that a notable event was at hand pervaded the city and imparted a tinge of sobered melancholy to earth and sky. . . One thought reigned in every mind and one name trembled on every lip.

"Dr. Whitsitt did not emerge from the presidential mansion until the time for the morning exercises was at hand. A serenity, so strikingly his distinguishing feature, marked his face and hid whatever of tumult went on in his soul. His entrance into Norton Hall where the exercises were to occur, stirred no applause. The people simply looked at him as he moved up the aisle—a look ineffably kind and reverential and were silent. Later on when the opening exercises had passed and a kindly reference to the man who sat in the chair was made the long suppressed passion of the assembly burst into applause, timid at first but growing in volume until its thunders actually shook the house. The brother who made the address of the morning was endured when he spoke on other themes; but if he dared to point his finger at Whitsitt, he became at once the friend and spokesman of the audience. They were there to pay court to just one, and all who assisted in that were friends. If there was music, its undertones were a loving good bye to the man whom Louisville delighted to honor. If a speech was made, it got its best hearing and its loudest applause when it uttered the sentiment of the hour. If honors came to the Seminary students, they took on a new charm and worth because they bore his signature and came straight from his hand. If prayers were offered they reached their utmost fervor when they called for blessings on the retiring president. Reporters flitted about like hungry birds but nothing satisfied them so well as news about Whitsitt. Elect women sat through the service with faces wet with tears and every tear was a messenger from some heart bringing tidings of grief and love."

One feature of the day was the presentation of the portrait of Dr. Whitsitt. Regarding this he writes:

"True it was only a shadow of a man but many felt as if there was healing power in the shadow and that it would shed endless grace upon the Seminary.

Digitized by Google

"At night the surging crowd came in,—apparently to the Commencement,—but really to get a final glimpse of the president and to hear his farewell words. It was overmastering to observe the subduing power of his voice and to mark the strain of attention with which every sentence was caught. The occasion and the man alike were too high for the indulgence of shallow sentiment or to appeal for the pity of tears. A tone of pensive gratitude pervaded the opening utterances of the valedictory but this soon gave place to a thrilling appeal for steadfastness in upholding the fundamental doctrines upon which the Seminary was founded. His last words were a plea for loyalty to truth. There was a mellowness of manner, a quiet sense of self respect, and a touch of exalted charity in his tone which went to the hearts of his brethren. He had been through intense experiences and the close of his official career was itself a crisis and it was pleasant to observe with what discretion and grace he bore himself."

After describing the closing scene when he ended his address Dr. Hatcher said that amid solemn silence:

"The people gradually retired from the hall, the lights went out and Dr. Whitsitt was no longer the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Thus passed out William H. Whitsitt from the service of the Southern Baptists. He left behind him the record of 27 years of continuous labor in our Seminary. No man ever had truer friends and not one ever carried with him more affectionate esteem and devotion into his retirement. Checkered, indeed, was his career. The sword went into his soul, and not all of his brethren could see eye to eye as to his wisdom and usefulness His convictions brought suffering and he showed the patience which marks the hero. What his immediate future will be is not known yet to the public, but it is hardly possible that the Baptist historians of the future will overlook his name. His last public words were: 'With charity for all and malice for none I bid you farewell.'"

The question as to Dr. Whitsitt's successor now confronted the Board. In fact they were already dealing with it. Dr. J. P. Green was elected but he declined.

In mid-Summer the Board met in Atlanta to elect a new pres-

Digitized by Google

ident, and many eyes were turned towards Atlanta. The Secretary of the Trustees Rev. Dr. M. D. Jeffries, thus describes the scene:

"All seemed uncertain; there was division of sentiment. Earnest prayers had been made, names were suggested for the important place that was to be filled. W. E. Hatcher arose in a somewhat hesitating way, yet with force in his words, and said that he had the name of a young man to present; he didn't know that he was the man but he believed in him. In a few such mild words, telling why he thought as he did, he presented the name of E. Y. Mullins. Without any great rush, but really with a spirit of questioning, yet of quiet conviction, the suggestion seemed to take hold of the board. There were brief, earnest talks, conviction moving steadily one way. Presently a vote was taken and we had selected, at the suggestion of brother Hatcher, the hand, brain and heart which guide today, in such a masterly way, the affairs of our Seminary."

An era of peace and hope seemed to have dawned for the Seminary and for the Denomination. It is said that Dr. Eaton seconded the nomination of Dr. Mullins and thus the divided forces seemed to have joined hands under the standard of the Seminary's new president.

A bit of news came to Dr. Hatcher one day that struck him a center blow. He was told that the election of Dr. Mullins was being spoken of in certain places as a victory for the old Whitsitt party and as a result of a Whitsitt movement. With him the Whitsitt war was over, his old weapons had been cast behind him and his face turned to the future and the intimation that he was nursing the old complaint in his nomination of Dr. Mullins brought him to his feet and he wrote in the Herald the following pungent statement:

"My attention has been called to the fact that there is a disposition in some quarters to accept the election of Dr. Mullins as the result of a Whitsitt movement. Of course newspapers say what they choose and in this frightfully free country, we must endure what we can not prevent. But, as I have been named as one who bore a part in winning a Whitsitt victory,

Digitized by Google

I feel that, for once at least, I must break silence and have a little chat with the Southern Baptists.

"I do not disguise the fact that in the Whitsitt agitation I stood with Dr. Whitsitt. This grew out of my approval of his administration and my intense desire to preserve intact the organization of our Seminary faculty. It is just to add that I have now much affectionate esteem for Dr. Whitsitt and my interest in him is not abated, in the least, by his separation from the Seminary; but my loyalty to the Seminary was never dependent upon Dr. Whitsitt's connection with it. When he went out my concern for the Seminary knew no diminution, and at once I cordially united with the majority of the Board in an effort to affect a speedy and satisfactory reorganization of the faculty. I met only the most fraternal confidence on the part of those who had not stood with me in a long and painful conflict and for myself I can say that not from the night that Dr. Whitsitt's resignation was accepted have I consciously done one act of a partisan sort to gratify the friends, or to wound the opponents, of Dr. Whitsitt. To have done so would have shown me unworthy of my position as a trustee. It was therefore with stunning surprise that I found that there were any who were ready to claim the action of electing Dr. Mullins as a triumph of the Whitsitt forces; and when I saw that I was being paraded as having been an actor in a partisan fight it cut me to the heart. I never looked for a Whitsitt man for the presidency of the Seminary. There was no line up of the Whitsitt men in the action in Atlanta. Indeed the supreme anxiety seemed to be to hit upon some man who could enable us to maintain peace in the Seminary and bring quiet to our borders.

"I am offended by any attempt to associate my name with any partisan action in the Board. The war is over with me. My party in the future will consist of those trustees whose action show them to be the most intense and unselfish in their devotion to the Seminary. My door will hide no skeletons. I nurse no bitter memories and have no partisan ends to serve. They of the Whitsitt side who seek to keep up the Whitsitt feeling will not have me to run with them. Forgetting the things that are behind I turn my face to the future and renew my pledges of loyalty to the Seminary.

"It pains me to be before the public speaking in this personal strain; but an unwillingness to be misunderstood on this matter has constrained me. My life at best is small, and cannot very

Digitized by Google

long continue; but I do not feel that I can consent to be gibbeted as a man 'with a grievance', seeking craftily to nurse a strife or punish a foe. I think that if I ever had any wounds received in the Whitsitt conflict they are thoroughly healed and the weather never grows so stormy as to make them pain me as once they did. If I find that any of these wounds break out afresh I will quietly call the ambulance and slip away to the hospital and appear no more until the doctor discharges me. If my troubles grow chronic and medicines fail me I will make my final bow to the brotherhood and hide myself in the home for the Incurables."

Several years after this Dr. Whitsitt writes:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—I rarely ever refer to the Whitsitt controversy but this article [on the leadership of Speaker Cannon] led me to review in my thoughts your management of that issue. There were one or two mistakes; but these were so slight as to possess little weight in the general mass of incidents. Among American Baptists no controversy has ever been fought so stoutly or so skillfully and none has been more fruitful of good results. . . I am grateful to you for the noble generalship you displayed in conducting it."

It may not be amiss to mention that Dr. Hatcher's friendship for Dr. Whitsitt was later on shown in his leadership of the movement to secure Dr. Whitsitt for the chair of Philosophy in Richmond College where the Doctor spent the remaining years of his life in useful service and among his devoted friends.

The above record of the Movement known as the "Whitsitt Controversy" has been given with no wish, of course, to awaken any unpleasant memories, to reopen any old wounds, or to make any unkind reference, but with the simple purpose to show Dr. Hatcher's relation to the movement. For Dr. Eaton the champion of the other side he had high admiration and respect and at the death of Doctor Eaton he wrote a tribute in the public press in his honor, saying among other things:

"The primal characteristic of Dr. Eaton was alertness. He was quick of foot, quick of hand, quick of thought, quick of tongue, and yet distinct in utterance, orderly in thought and

Digitized by Google

guarded in movement. His mental processes flowed with a rush, and his only draw-back in public speech was his difficulty in formulating and phrasing his thoughts as fast as they came.

"Now that the activities and conflicts of his life are closed, both his closest friends and his severest critics must pause in sober reflection and readjust, under the light of justice and love, their judgment of this unusual, resourceful personality. Under calm thinking we shall see more clearly the good and admire more the greatness in his life. We will gather in spiritual fellowship about his tomb and hail him as our brother in Christian bonds, as a messenger of the everlasting gospel, as a leader in our Baptist Israel, and as a warrior in the battles of the Lord. Gone from the strifes of life and now a citizen of the eternal city, we can all unite in the hope that we shall meet him face to face in that city whose builder and maker is God.

"In those trying times," writes Dr. Jeffries, the secretary of the Board,"when there was division among Southern Baptists and in the board over the Whitsitt matter, there was a contest in the board between giants. What wrestling that was! But let the secretary, who had the trying task of recording it all, bear public testimony that none of those strong men ever took unfair hold. These servants of the Lord, were contending for the right, as they saw it; there was never in the board any of that ugly spirit and bitter accusing which marred press and speech of that time. Dr. Hatcher was spokesman and leader on one side of that contest."

He addressed the Baptist Social Union of Cincinnatti on "The Baptist of the Future." He was a thorough-going Baptist. It is true that he kept the windows of his soul open towards those of every christian faith and mingled with them in loving fellowship, but he stood four square as a Baptist. He gloried in the history of his Baptist fathers and believed in the doctrines and in the future of the Baptists. In his address to his Cincinnati audience, he said:

"The Baptist of the future is a necessity. His name is on the schedule of the ages and he will have to answer when called. The Baptists of the present generation have a large order on hand—far larger than they can fill by the time they will have to step out and this unfinished business will be left to the Baptist of the Future."

Digitized by Google

The future of his own denomination was a subject that often came before his mind. He touched upon it at the opening of his Cincinnatti address declaring that some people asserted that the time would come when all christians would be Baptists and every church a Baptist church. Others believed, he said, that not the Baptist name but the Baptist principles would capture the world.

He attempted no prediction regarding such questions. He simply said:

"These are matters of detail for the latter days and we are not prepared to discuss them. But there are things we know. We know that Baptists have solid reasons for their existence. They never split off from anybody. They have been born of great convictions. They stand for doctrines, fundamental and sadly overlooked and they can do no otherwise than to uphold the truth though it involves separation from all others."

He paid tribute to the heroism of our Baptist forefathers, drawing a graphic picture of old John Weatherford, a Baptist preacher, of Virginia, who, imprisoned for his faith, continued to preach through the jail bars to the people on the outside, some of whom would wickedly whack his hands with their knives as, in his earnest gesturing, his hands would often be extended towards them through the bars and would sometimes sprinkle the hearers with his blood.

He touched upon that branch of the Baptists known as the "Old School Baptists";—those whose extreme views of predestination made them oppose sending the gospel to the heathen, and who as a sect are fast dying out.

"They built," says he, "on the rock of God's eternal decrees and had a sure foundation. They pressed their narrow and icy creed to their breasts until it froze and shriveled their whole nature. They have been run over and crushed by the urgent friends of the commission which they misunderstood and opposed. Alas, they now hasten to an extinction which they have invited and made inevitable. Ichabod is written on their banner and their diminishing remnant lingers superfluous on the stage.

Digitized by Google

"There are two ways of indoctrinating others. One is by driving the truth into those we wish to save. We catch the sinner or the heretic, growl furiously at him on account of his badness, threaten him with ruin, hurl the gospel at him with evident intent to kill and force him to surrender or die.

"We are learning the better method,—that of a bright contagious life. The new champion of the truth is a delightful gentleman. He recognizes the good in others, shows the beauty of truth by living it, stimulates the study of it by knowing it and sheds on the air the mellow radiance of a heavenly character. . . . Doctrine wrapped in courtesy and delivered by those whose overall is charity is robbed of much of its repulsiveness."

He draws the line between sentiment and sentimentalism:

"Sentiment is logic clothed in the garb of passion. But sentimentalism is sentiment overdone; it is the excess of feeling, the riot of passion."

The speaker sees a brighter day coming:

"The sentimental attitude toward doctrine" says he "is weakening. Acceptance of creeds on account of heredity, or domestic or social influences must disappear before the reign of intelligence. Dogmas are not to be judged by their antiquity or by their former popularity, but on the score of their truth. A Baptist church is a dismal home for a sentimentalist."

He was strong in the belief that the doctrines of the Baptists were Bible doctrines,—commanded and practiced by Christ and the Apostles, and consequently he could not hold these truths lightly. While the New Testament made him a Baptist yet he had no quarrel with those who traveled a different doctrinal path. In fact he accorded them respect for their honest convictions.

"After all," says he, "the best definition of a Baptist is a christian with the Bible in his hand accepting it as the ultimate deliverance of God, acknowledging its authority, submitting to its requirements, obeying its doctrines, so far as understood, and determined to understand the rest.

Digitized by Google

"Baptists ought to be the world's leaders in scientific investigation and there are indications that this will be the case. They are fitted for the task. Those who build upon man-made creeds and feel that when they sign the creed they are saved, would do well to avoid the frontiers of research. They may have their underpinning knocked out by some fact in nature or in history. But they who plant their life in the word of the living God are free and they are strong, and you cannot lose them. Order them out on the front, let them wrestle with the fiercest problems of error and the deepest mysteries of nature, but the gates of hell will never prevail against them."

He had a burning ambition for the usefulness for his Denomination:

"Heretofore the Baptists have been busy with the primary questions of the christian life,—how to be saved, how to build their houses, how to bring in the lost, how to enjoy liberty, how to spread the gospel and many of these questions will continue to press upon them, but the Baptists are becoming great,—in numbers, riches, rank, learning and social power and they will be in good condition hereafter to lead in the world's imperial search for truth. Our grandchildren ought to be kings and priests in the temple of knowledge.

"The genius of the Baptists is freedom—freedom from ecclesiastical restrictions—freedom from the literalism of creed—freedom from the perils of tradition—freedom to serve—and freedom to guide. For this lofty specimen of manhood there must be room at the head."

He brings his address to its ending by raising the question as to where the Baptist of the Future would come from:

"I suggest that the Baptist of the Future will very probably be a buck-eye [Ohioan]. My experience of late in this giant growing state makes me quite decided in this forecast of our denominational future. But I am suffering with an anxiety. You have lately discovered such defiant ambition for producing Presidents that I fear you will get worldly and lose your power to produce spiritual giants. It may moderate your political pride to know that Virginia once thought herself happy in having a sort of monopoly in President-making. But she has retired from that business and gone to raising Baptists

Digitized by Google

and there is just a little whisper in the breeze which blows down from the hill-tops of the future that the coming Baptist will be a Virginian.

"Be this as it may at last turn out to be, we are the Baptists of today, and we must make it easy for the Baptist of tomorrow. Let us hold our banner high and when we have to pass it to the Baptist of the future let it be so clean and fair that he will not be ashamed of the Baptist of the Past."

From Cincinnatti he turned his face towards Dayton and from thence to Louisville. To one who was such a lover of his friends as was he, a delicious prospect opened before him:

"The next morning", he writes, "I stole off to Dayton,—fair queen of the Ohio cities and the scene of many tender memories. Of that little visit I must not trust myself to speak except to say that it involved a reception, kindly arranged in the afternoon by Dr. Colby, a sermon, two addresses, an exhilarating ride throughout the embowered streets of the city, handshakes uncounted, reunions, brief (but blessed), sights of many, many friends and hours of boundless joys with the Colbys."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXIII

1898—1900

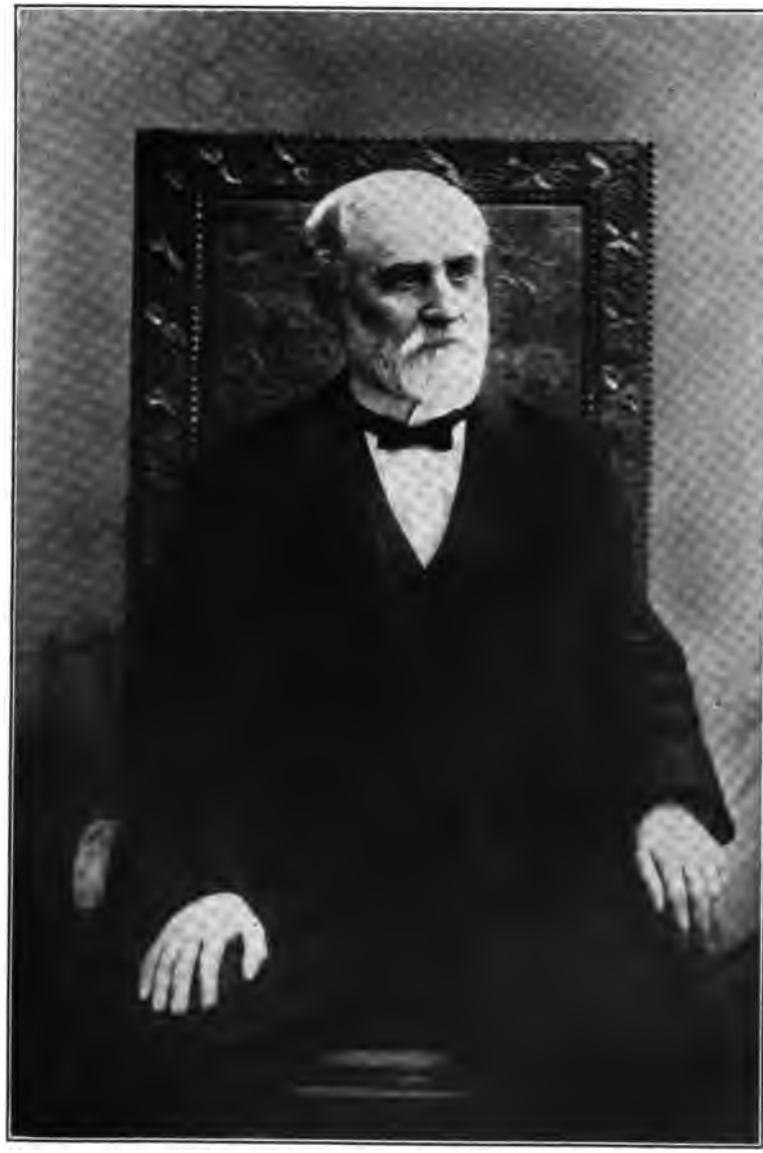
PASSION FOR IMPROVEMENT. PREACHERS' HOUSE PARTY. FORK UNION ACADEMY STARTED. SICKNESS. THE NOVEL. VARIED LABORS.

Soon after he built his Summer home at Fork Union his instinct for improvement showed itself in the case of the Fork Union village. He did not like its appearance. He felt that the Fork Union people were equal in intelligence and religious character to those in any of the Virginia communities, but as to the village,—there was a general need of whitewash, paint and repair work. A meeting of the people of the community was called and he addressed them on "improvement", and among the other results of his speech he kindled in them an ambition to make their buildings and lots more attractive, and in a very short time the brush, the broom and the hammer began the work of transformation.

"Your father came on Friday", writes my mother, "when the young people of the neighborhood, and the old ones as well of Fork Union, turned out en-masse. He made them a talk and things went well. He has organized an Improvement Society here in Fork Union and things are on the upward move. The 2nd of September he will lecture."

His Fork Union Summer home—"Careby Hall," as it was called—was gradually becoming a fountain of new joys to him. He had a "Preachers' House Party" during this Summer at Careby Hall, and among the guests were the following ministers: Drs. T. S. Dunaway, R. H. Pitt, James B. Taylor, J. R. Bagby,

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Rev. R. H. Winfree and Rev. H. A. Bagby. The happiest of all was the host. He plunged into the games and other festivities with the enthusiasm of a boy and his enjoyment became contagious.

"Careby Hall," writes Dr. Pitt in the Herald "is the name of the ample and handsome country home of Dr. William E. Hatcher. It is beautiful for situation, crowning one of the lofty hills which overlook the pleasant village of Fork Union, in the good old county of Fluvanna. Thither went early in the last week a company of congenial brethren, by special invitation of the family, to spend some days in rest and recreation. They were happy days whose hours glided away all too swiftly. There were two public meetings—Dr. T. S. Dunnaway, lecturing in the day on 'Woman' and in the evening Dr. Hatcher, told a large company of hearers, in his own inimitable way of 'Sights beyond the Sea'. As for our host he never seemed so happy. Surely none of us will ever think of this pleasant episode in our lives without breathing a benediction on our dear and honored friends."

His interest in Fork Union grew day by day. He noticed that the boys in the community were busy on the farm, while the girls, as a rule, were off at school. This fact disturbed Dr. Hatcher and one day during the House Party, as he was driving some of the ministers in his carriage, one of them, pointing to a beautiful grove of trees, (at Mr. Walker Snead's home), said: "What a splendid place that would be for a school!" He told them that an Academy for Fork Union was a matter that lay heavy upon his heart. In fact he informed them that he wanted to begin operations that Fall.

"That will be impossible" said one of the ministers. "I think your idea of planting an Academy here an excellent one, but it is now late in September and some of the schools are already starting. I think you can have it ready a year from now." To the surprise of all he announced that the new Academy would open its doors in about two weeks. The people of the community were stirred to the depths by the announcement.

Digitized by Google

"Charles is talking and booming the Academy that is to be," writes my mother to me from Fork Union as late as September, 27th. "Your father is to lecture here on Thursday night on 'What will you do with your boy?' "

The "Charles" whom she mentions was Captain Charles G. Snead and at this late day, January 1915, it can still be said that he is "talking and booming the Academy." Through all these years he has been the same ardent friend and champion and helper of the school.

"Fork Union is alive with enthusiasm about the school,—called the Academy" writes my mother on October 9th. "Mr. Martin is teacher,—your father, President of Board of Trustees, $500 is guaranteed, girls and boys to be received the first year. It will open Thursday night with public exercises. It is a promising project."

His Fall work in Richmond was now crowding him with its duties, but of course he came up to Fork Union Thursday night for the launching of the infant Academy. This Academy opened for him a fresh source of happiness by giving to him a new opportunity for helping boys. Through all his ministerial life he had been picking up boys, putting his loving impress upon them, and if possible, firing them with an ambition for an education and a useful life. From this time,—more and more —it came to be one of his habits, while out on his trips through Virginia, to be on the lookout for a boy for Fork Union. "I stop at Careby Hall today for sorely needed rest" he writes me on November 15th, "I have a new boarder for the Academy on the train with me." The name of that new boarder is not given, but he was the forerunner of a long procession of pupils whom he brought to the Academy.

The early pages of this biography, in telling the story of Dr. Hatcher's conversion, when a fourteen year mountain boy, told of his moonlight walk to his country church on a Saturday night when he was overtaken by a man, Munroe Hatcher, who explained to him, in simple fashion, the plan of salvation and

Digitized by Google

in that way led him to Christ. Almost fifty years had passed since that night and Munroe, now an old man, was still living. He heard one day that the Baptist General Association of the state was to meet in Lynchburg,—not very far away. He knew that it would probably be the last chance that he, at his advanced age, would ever have of attending the Association, and so he went, and on Saturday morning in the Association, Dr. Hatcher's eye, as it moved over the throng, fell upon his aged benefactor, Munroe. At a certain point in the prodceedings he arose and said:

"Brother moderator, about fifty years ago, in the adjoining county of Bedford, when I was an awkward country boy burdened about my sins and groping for the light, a man met me one night and in gentle, kindly fashion led me to the Savior. His name was Munroe Hatcher and I see him in the audience this morning. I beg pardon for the seeming egotism but I feel that I must acknowledge my immeasurable debt to him here before you all."

As he said that, he called the name of Munroe Hatcher and the old man was asked to come forward. I can see him now,—tall and rugged looking—pushing his way through the throng to the platform and receiving from Dr. Hatcher his grateful, loving handgrasp before the people. No sooner was this done than the delegates, as if by a common impulse, moved to the front to give the Bedford veteran their affectionate greeting. There were not many dry eyes and it was a picture not easily erased from the memory of those who witnessed it.

The Herald, after telling of the greeting that was given by the Association to Munroe Hatcher, thus continued:

"It is worthy of remark that just a few hours before, while sitting in one of the rooms of the church at Opelika,—far away in Alabama,—Dr. W. C. Bledsoe, the honored Secretary of the Board of State Missions, had told the writer the story of his conversion. He was a Confederate soldier on furlough in Fluvanna, and at old Fluvanna church he heard a sermon from Dr. Hatcher which touched his heart and led him to inquire

Digitized by Google

the way of salvation. 'I can never forget' he said 'how tenderly and sympathetically Hatcher led me out of the darkness into the light, and how fervently he prayed for me out under the trees in the neighborhood.' Thus, from the work of this faithful old man in Bedford, who led Dr. Hatcher to Christ, the lines of influence have gone out into this distant state."

"HAMPTON, VA., November 16th, 1898.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,—At the meeting of the Association [at Lynchburg]. . . it gave me the greatest pleasure to notice how much you are honored and how greatly you are appreciated by our brethren. I hope that our God for many years will permit you to give your valuable services to our brethren. I envy you the opportunities you have for doing good and your great common sense and tact.

"As regards the Main Building at the Orphanage for her [his deceased wife] and for the Master's sake, I will be one of twenty to give $1,000 to erect a $20,000 building.

"With the prayer that our God will spare you for many years to our denomination.

"Yours Fraternally,
"Henry L. Schmelz."

To Dr. E. W. Hunt he writes on November 25th:

"My lad Coleman, who enlisted in the army, is home and we are happiness embodied over his get back. He is quite a satisfactory youth in several respects.

"By the way I have another—just taken and full of promise. If I had that little Paul in hand also I would be happy."

He had the great joy on December 11th, of entering his new church building,—not the auditorium, but the Sunday School room; but this, with its many side rooms, furnished ample attractive accommodations. Many hearts in Richmond rejoiced that day that the Grace Street church, with their brave pastor,—so long without their own church building—were once more entering a beautiful structure of their own at their old corner at Foushee and Grace Streets. Concerning the dedication and the new edifice the Herald says:

Digitized by Google

GRACE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH AS REBUILT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"As a piece of architectural beauty the great building, with its handsome, brown-stone trimmings, its rounded walls, its lofty and beautiful spire and its massive doors and numerous windows is the admiration of Richmond.

"By the special request of his brethren, Dr. Hatcher preached the sermon. His text was 'For the Father seeketh such to worship him" and the theme of his sermon was 'God the Father, seeking for true worshippers.' There was profound feeling during the sermon and it looked as if the hand of God had touched the vast audience.

"At his church meeting on Monday night Dr. Hatcher declared that his church was a harp of a thousand strings and if one was discordant he did not know it."

He took great delight in his grandchildren. He thus writes concerning "Virginia," one of Kate's daughters:

"Virginia is a dashing genius. She has a most exalted opinion of her *ganfaver* and of course that shows that she knows a first class article when she sees it in a front window."

He delivered a series of addresses in January at Mercer University, and, a month later, he aided Dr. W. W. Landrum in meetings at his church in Atlanta, and also preached the dedication sermon at Dr. L. G. Broughton's new Tabernacle. My marriage to Miss Anna Denson of Norfolk occured on March 28th; he performed the ceremony, and regarding his new daughter-in-law he wrote me a few weeks later:

"Tell Anna that I have been unaccountably happy of late—somewhat to my surprise. There seems no local cause for any extra enjoyment on my part. In fact my bothers have been swarming. It is unaccountable that I should be in such a radiant mood—unless it be that I am so proud of my new daughter. Possibly that is what is the matter with me. But, of course, the matter of this blissful mood continuing may depend a deal upon the way she treats Careby this Summer."

In a letter to his wife, after saying that he does not know what to do about his well at Careby he adds: "I may send the trap this week or next. But that is another puzzle and I must

Digitized by Google

take time on puzzles when they grow three in a hill." Another of his pastor friends departed from Richmond—Dr. L. R. Thornhill:

"The going of Thornhill breaks a holy tie with me. In many things he is far more to me than any other man in the Minister's conference. We know each other and I believe in him with a faith that would suffer martyrdom if necessary.

"My intimates are not numerous these days and my isolation is not always tempered by the thought that a brother is in easy reach if I need comfort. But men ought not to be weak enough to yearn for sympathy.

"Dr. ——— is here. I have been giving him attention. He is sober and fond of quiet. I am too much of a rusher for him. I would wear him out before I got my blood up."

The Fall campaign is always a straining season in a pastor's career. After writing of the sensational efforts of some desperate pastors to drum up a Sunday night throng, he says:

"Truly it is a tough thing to be a pastor at any time. It looks as if you may do as you will and then be quite sure that you ought to have done some other way. Arrow shooting among the members is at its best during the Autumn and few pastors escape the fusillade. Do what they may, they are called to nervousness and prone to resign during the Fall days."

He spoke in October at the inauguration of Dr. E. Y. Mullins as President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, saying of Dr. Mullins, in the course of his address, "He is blind to incidents, but faces issues",—a statement that would be singularly applicable to himself. In his leadership of a movement he generally kept his fire for the main attack.

"I started a movement several weeks ago," he writes, "to build an Academy building [at Fork Union] to cost $3,000 and we have about $2,000 already promised.

"I get very tired and actually feel the weight of years upon my shoulders. But what a small difference my dropping out of the procession will make."

The details of the pastorate now strained him heavily.

Digitized by Google

GRANDFATHER AND VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

At the General Association in Richmond in November visiting ministers,—former Virginians—were introduced to the body one day by the president, after which Dr. Hatcher created a burst of laughter by saying:

"Brother Moderator, I think it would be appropriate to sing the hymn:

'As long as the lamp holds out to burn
The vilest sinner may return?' "

"During the recent meeting of the General Association" writes Rev. R. A. Tucker. "Dr. William E. Hatcher, that great friend of all struggling interests made a statement concerning this object [The Fisher Memorial] and took a collection for the same."

"My health is not by any means bouyant" he writes to me "and my spirits have a contemptible way of getting dismally down. At times I stagger under my burdens and almost sigh for rest. It may be laziness and I must discourage it."

Nearer and nearer he is drawing to the top of his steep pastoral hill. He writes me:

"I have read what you wrote about Inspiration. It is a far reaching question and you ought to read up all shades of opinion—get the latest results of conservative christian scholarship on the subject. Of course you need to know thoroughly the history of the make up of the Bible,—*both Testaments*. Anything you publish on that matter needs mature study and much revision. It is a great theme and you may make great deliverances but be sure of your ground."

To my wife he writes:

"Richmond, Va., December 11th 1899.

"My lovely Anna,—Your letter was a gem and I am a monster for not taking the first train for Norfolk. But you know, my little dear, that things are not in a Millennial shape. Other things rank my health, in point of value, and my aches have to go on.

"By the way we are thinking of going to the Hut in the

Digitized by Google

Brush called 'Careby' for Christmas. . . Of course you will be there,—you and the young man who over-married himself. That is understood.

"Yours,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

The death of Mr. Moody, the great evangelist, touched him deeply. He wrote in the Herald on January 11th, a tribute to him:

"Moody was a magnet. . . The best and the worst believed in him. He was the matchless leveler. He was a fountain of healing waters and seemed to cure all manner of diseases."

"I have flopped around in a noisy and unproductive way since Christmas" he writes "and apparently the world will have no occasion to build any lofty shaft to commemorate my useful services to mankind. For one thing, I was struck with a mania to write a novel and have on hand about one hundred and fifty pages of it with which to annoy my friends. Of course it will not disturb the serenity of succeeding generations."

A novel! That is his latest venture;—but more about this later.

"Dr. Hatcher", says the Herald "had planned to leave Richmond for Atlanta this week to help Dr. McDonald in special services there. On Sunday, however, he was taken with a sharp sickness from which he is still suffering. His physician Dr. H. Wythe Davis, says that rest is imperative for him."

At last the climax comes,—the climax of the strain and burdens of a twenty five years' pastorate in connection with multitudes of other activities. He drops under the load and is laid upon his bed of sickness and in a short while the doctor orders him off to the rest and quiet of Careby Hall, his country home. No sooner does he arrive at Fork Union, ill though he was, than he begins to train some of the Sunday School boys for a dialogue.

Digitized by Google

"This morning I have laid out a little work" he writes—"a short dialogue for Ellis and Claude Snead—a deep secret known to none. They are to say it at the B. Y. P. U."

"FORK UNION, VA., February 8, 1900.

"MY DEAR ELDRIDGE,—I have played the solitary and soothed my fretting nerves by the lightest reading that I could hit upon. Repose is my best ointment and sleep my medicine. I hope by next week to be ready for the storm and clash of battle again.

"Careby Hall is beautiful. Winter cannot blight its charms. . . . I ought to say that my people have been wonderfully sweet and anxious during my sickness.

"(Right at this point I was interrupted by a posse of Academy boys who came to call upon me.)

"I must say that the Academy is a flower of Paradise. . . . We are set on having a new building for next year which will cost,—say $4,000.

"I have been writing a story this winter. It lacks much of completion, though it is now about 130 pages on type writer. You must hear a fragment of it when we meet."

My wife and I spent nearly a week with him at Fork Union during his Careby sickness and had the pleasure of hearing him read the novel—or rather that part of the novel—which he had written.

The scene of the story is laid in the Fork Union village, which, in the story, is called Tresden Lodge. Evidently his favorite character in the novel is "Burton," the village store keeper and post-master, who was constantly doing unsuspected kindnesses and who seemed to have a mortal horror of being caught in the act. The novel opens with a description of Burton and thus continues:

"On the day our story opens a new padlock seemed to have been put on Burton's lips. His new clerk, Frank Copeland, said to the wagon driver: 'The boss hasn't spoken but once this blessed morning.' He failed, however, to tell the whole story for he, Frank, had buttressed himself against a post and had had his hands in his pockets for a full hour when Burton strolled solemnly by and gently,—almost apologetically—

Digitized by Google

inquired of his new clerk: 'Young man, were you born with your hands in your pockets, or were the pockets built around your hands at a later period?'

"Frank felt a shiver and a jar and, in his confusion, he slipped up to his room in the second story and sewed his pockets up.

"Burton had just finished opening and distributing the mail when a quick step was heard at the front door and a stranger strode in and moved on the post-master as if he had a private quarrel to settle. The new-comer was short and full, his pants were stuffed in his boots, his necktie was having a quiet Saturday at home and his huge buggy whip trailed on the floor behind him.

"Fastening his eye on Burton, this stranger approached him and asked:

"Is there a letter in the office for Carp Klenshaw?

"Burton commenced slowly to run through the letters. The stranger was carrying a surplus of vitality and after a season he popped several flippant questions at Burton:

" 'How d'you like being post-master and store-keeper both?'

"No response from Burton.

" 'Got many folks that come to your place for their mail?'

"These questions and others secured no recognition, whatever, from the imperturbable Burton. Irritated by the obstinate silence of the postmaster the stranger finally remarked to Burton:

" 'Well I notice you seem inflated about your stomach and so I guess you have swallowed your voice.'

"Burton flashed one momentary, satyrical glance at the stranger, but uttered not a word and gave no sign that he was in the least affected by the remark.

" 'I believe' said Burton 'that your name is Carp Klenshaw. Was not that what you said when you first came in?'

"His words were slow and measured.

" 'That is the name I used to be called by when I lived in a country where folks know how to talk,' said the aggressive Klenshaw.

"By this time Burton had fished out a letter with Carp Klenshaw's name on it.

" 'Stranger about here?' he asked as he handed the letter to Klenshaw with a look that suggested conciliation.

" 'Happy day' said the stranger, 'I am delighted that you have coughed up your voice. It seems not to be in good order. You had better throw her up on the shed and let her dry.'

" 'How long since you bought a controlling interest in my

Digitized by Google

natural faculties?' inquired the unruffled Burton, as he put the package of letters back in their place and wiped a little dust from the desk. After a long pause he added:

" 'I always understood that the human voice was a device of nature to produce speech, but not designed primarily to rattle.' "

"These words did not strike Klenshaw as signifying much, but they gave him a sort of inward wrench. It looked as if he had been tampering with an electric battery. He found himself instinctively respecting Burton, though he rather wished that he might frame an excuse for hating him. It occured to him that he ought to laugh it away before they parted, but it mystified him to find that he was so helpless. Usually he had been able to hold his own with all comers. But Burton was inaccessible. As a final expedient he said in a tone at once apologetic and defiant:

" 'It looks as if my playful remarks have given offense where none was intended. Hereafter I will be more careful in my dealings with thin-skinned animals.'

"A pale and serene smile flickered on Burton's brow. He was in full charge of himself, but he was not unwilling to have an occasional contest.

" 'My father once had a blooded boar' said Burton 'that undertook to bite off a shovel handle. He broke his tusk and swallowed it and my father said that he—the boar—had inward pains all his life. If you are suffering I will give you a pill.'

" 'I suppose that means that I am the boar and you are the shovel handle' said the baffled Klenshaw 'and I believe that is about the size of it. I see you are a dangerous customer to monkey with. Give me one, sweet smile and we will take another chance at each other some other day.'

" 'Just as you say' spoke Burton with a suggestion of warmth in his manner."

The story then proceeds to tell how Klenshaw walked out on the porch of the store and spied two horses dashing down the road towards the store at break-neck speed. They were hitched to a carriage in which was seated a beautiful young lady with her old aunt and both of the ladies were terror-stricken. Klenshaw rushed into the middle of the road, leaped for the reins, and managed finally to stop the horses, but, in the struggle, his shoulder was dislocated. He was tenderly taken in hand by Burton and much against his wishes, was carried to Burton's

Digitized by Google

room over the store where he was given every possible attention. The second chapter opens with Klenshaw stretched out on Burton's snowy bed and a darkey about to enter the room as Klenshaw's nurse.

"An interesting figure appeared in the door—an aged negro, unqualified in his blackness, but clean as a new penny and with a manner almost regal in its dignity. His garb told of better days and showed that the brush could help, if it could not renew, an old garment, and as he came in he made a bow that was gracious as well as submissive.

" 'Skuse me sar' the old negro said with a majestic wave of his right hand; 'Mars Burt'n sont me ter stay wi' you durin' your illness, an sar, her' I is. My name is Isrel Brookley; I bars de nam uv m'ole mars' Cul' Arthur Brookley who lived at Granite Cliff on the lower plantation.

" 'Well' said Klenshaw evidently confounded by the kindness of Burton who never took the pains to consult his wishes, 'Mr. Burton is far freer with his acts than his words. It is more than I am used to to be waited on and I hardly think that I need you. Anyhow I wish you would kinder slip my hand around to see if it will get over its numb feeling. It hurts like forty."

"Israel was a skilled nurse. He had handled men for sickness, for wounds and for nocturnal revels at Granite Cliff. He slid his arm under the pillow, changed its position, altered the angle at the elbow and gave a lick or two at the bolster and instantly Klenshaw felt a sense of relief that was delightful. In a minute he was fast asleep and Israel quietly sought a chair and sat down. Presently the sleeper began to stir and to show signs of suffering. In a twinkle the watchful nurse was at his side and put his hand on the brow of the patient. Its effect was instantaneous and for an hour he stood there stroking the temple of the sleeper.

" 'You think I have been asleep, do you?' asked Klenshaw.

" 'No; sar; I know'd you warnt 'sleep. I seed dat frum de blow uv your breff, but you was quiit and dat was de med'cin you oughter had.'

"Klenshaw was a Pennsylvanian and had just come to Virginia, a few weeks before, to saw up a lot of white-oak timber which his company had bought on the other side of Benton Creek. As for the negroes he had no sentiment in their favor. He had heard they would not work, were great

Digitized by Google

believers in ghosts, spent most of their time in religious revels and were as truly barbarians as if they had been brought in on the last ship from Africa.

"The sight of the venerable old negro was not pleasing to him. He did not know how to treat this hoary son of Africa.

" 'You and Mr. Burton been together all your lives?' he asked as a starter.

" 'Lord bless you, No, sar, we aint; I'se ole nough to be Mist' Burt'n's grand father' exclaimed Israel. 'His father was my ole mars' overseer. He didn' have nothin' ter do wid me tho' 'cause I staid at de house. I was de Curnill's hostler sar.'

" 'You dont mean that you were ever one of them Southern slaves?' asked Klenshaw.

" 'Might I arsk you wat your name is,' put in Israel almost glaring at him, 'I mean no disrespec' but I finds it hard to d'rect my talk to an unbeknown gen'lmun'.

" 'My name is Klenshaw' said the individual involved 'and if it will in any way guide your aim in talking I will say also that you are the first slave that I ever met and I would like to hear what you have to say about yourself.'

" 'S'kuse me, Mr. ————; what you call yourself?' broke out the confused Israel.

" 'Klenshaw' the owner of the name repeated.

" 'Tank you sar' said Israel smiling in spite of himself; 'dat is a fine sounding name. Did your father ever live up the James river? Seems to me that I've hearn of the name of the ——; I mean the family of that name.'

" 'Do not strain your mind old man about my name or about my family,' said the frank and honest Pennsylvanian. 'My family is a broken stick and I smell of the saw mill. So you need not try to tie me on to any high folks.'

"Israel was dumbstruck. He had grown up in the atmosphere of the Virginia Aristocracy. Poverty to him for years looked like a badge of shame for white people."

Thus the story moved along with its dialogues and its character sketches. He wrote several chapters but his return to Richmond, where clamorous duties awaited him, seemed to close the door to any further work on the story.

"For months" he writes Orie from Careby "I have had a measure of nervous depression which at times has been crit-

Digitized by Google

ical and I am anxious to be stronger—if I am ever to be—before I take up my burdens."

He returned to Richmond and plunged afresh into his work. He writes:

"My cares over the Academy and the Orphanage have been very oppressive and are yet and I am thinking of unloading."

How often during these passing years he would threaten himself with an "unloading"; but the skies would afterwards clear up and the unloading be postponed.

At the Southern Baptist Convention in Hot Springs, Ark., in May he showed his resourcefulness as a speaker.

The Baptist Courier thus refers to the incident:

"Dr. W. E. Hatcher, the Grand Old Man of Virginia Baptists, had for his theme 'A Century of Baptist Preachers.' Dr. Hatcher had been in delicate health, had not intended coming to the Convention, and had forgotten about the address expected of him, until he was reminded after reaching the grounds. His address on 'Century Day' was wholly extemporaneous, and seemed to be almost entirely impromptu. It came alongside of the capital speeches of Drs. Carroll and McDonald. I am safe in saying that I never heard an impromptu speech of such sparkling vivacity, humor, wit, pathos, and wisdom. Surely no other man in the Convention could have done it.

"Dr. Hatcher has in wonderful degree the elements of Christian leadership. There are in him maturity, wisdom, judgement, magnetism, and unfailing resource, together with an evident sweet humility learned of the Master."

One paper stated:

"Rev. W. E. Hatcher introduced as belonging to the whole South, but temporarily located at Richmond made one of the most facetious, happy, eloquent speeches of the Convention, his subject being 'A Century of Baptist Preachers.'

The new child of his heart, the Fork Union Academy, had now reached its first Commencement, and as he presided on that occasion he was exhuberantly happy.

Digitized by Google

"I am just home from the Commencement of the Fork Union Academy which occurred on Tuesday" he writes me; "Prof. Mitchell was the orator of the day and he really dazzled the people by his eloquence and learning. In the afternoon we had speeches, music and dialogues by the school and we fairly ran the people wild. It was thrilling to witness the eager and delighted crowd. I had a reception at Careby and that closed the session. We are building the Academy house and it is to be large and superb. . . We have in sight a small flood of students for next year."

Ex-Governor Northern of Georgia wrote him:

"God has helped you to bring so much sunshine into the life of so many people that you deserve a great flood of it all the time from your brethren. If the warm and abiding love of my heart can bring you any gladness, you shall have it in all the devotion of the most tender affection."

He yearned to help the needy boys who were struggling for an education. He declared that the Colleges and Universities had millions of dollars at their disposal, "but who will help the dear fellow at the bottom" said he; "There he is—a country lad, great browed, unsociable, gloomy in his isolation, mourning over his restrictions, dying for an opportunity." A young man writes him:

"Some time ago, when on the train on your way to Fork Union, you told me that you would help me in a pecuniary way if I wanted to attend the Seminary this Fall."

The young man goes on to tell of his decision to attend the Seminary and of his hope that Dr. Hatcher can help him. This was simply one of many such letters of appeal. During his Summer vacation he wrote: "I have utterly lost the art of resting,—except by preaching." Here is his picture of a day spent in returning from the Eastern Shore:

"But alas, think of me—tortured by the dread of an alarm clock, jerked out of bed at three-thirty in the morning, stumbling drowsily around, and stuffing a senseless telescope with bulging bundles, lumbering down a dim stairway scrambling into

Digitized by Google

a buggy, yawning and gaping along under cold and unpitying stars, peering up a straight track to catch the sight of the coming train and finally tumbling into the cars and feeling that life is, after all, a mixed affair. That was the fate of yours humbly on the return morning.

"But things righted up fully that day. I cut the morning train and stopped over to see Henry Schmelz. My call had a business basis—some perplexing orphanage matters; but Henry actually quit the bank, proclaimed a holiday, took me on a sail, showed me the grim mysteries of the Rip Raps, made me the laughing stock of the denizens of the sea by putting me to fishing, gave me hours of earnest conference on the orphanage problem, dined me at the hotel and sent me on my homeward way. Friday evening showed me Richmond and an assembled building committee waiting for me."

In August his third grandchild, William E. Hatcher, Jr., was born.

He held another meeting at Wake Forest College and from there he wrote: "Yesterday will be remembered as one of the greatest days of my life." He had immense capacity for "having a good time."

"Friends do me ill at times" he writes "by charging me with excessive exhuberance in describing the happiness of my experiences as I go forth on my revival trips. They say that I write as if I always see the best of earth and heaven.

"But now possibly on former occasions I may have overdrawn my picture, but this time I simply have to drop to bottom figures and use no extra colors. It does look to me as clear as sunlight that my last trip to Wake Forest easily eclipses all that ever went before. Indeed I am so enraptured by the glories of this last time that it almost seems that my previous times must have been failures.

"I was at Wake Forest nine days having slipped away from Richmond without asking my lovely and tyrannical church if I might 'go out'. This I did because I was afraid that if I asked permission I might be stood up in the corner and punished for previous transgressions. But what I did for my Lord while I was gone I requested should be put to the credit of my church.

"Bear in mind that several families contended for me—much

Digitized by Google

to the inflation of my conceit—and I insisted on staying with all of them, but was finally suppressed and kept under control, except that I did break bread with the Poteats, the Caddells and the Brewers."

His family circle was broken by the death of his oldest daughter,—May, who for a long while had been an invalid. She died at Careby Hall. The funeral was preached by Rev. W. P. Hines, the pastor of the West View Church in Richmond in which she had rendered very devoted service,—first when it was a Mission and later when it developed into a church.

He was not idle at the meeting of the General Association in Bristol,—as is seen from Dr. Fisher's words in the Herald:

"What would we do without Dr. W. E. Hatcher? What a power he is! How easily and gracefully he brings things to pass. He was never happier than at the Bristol meetings."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXIV

1900—1902

HIS CHINESE BOY. COLEMAN M————. DEDICATION OF HIS NEW BUILDING. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RICHMOND COLLEGE CALL. RESIGNATION. EDUCATIONAL WORK. LETTERS TO CHILDREN. ROCKEFELLER CAMPAIGN.

It was at this time that a Chinese boy, Ah Fong Yeung, became linked into his life in a very close and permanent way. The boy had been sent over to America to be trained at Richmond College and, when disappointment threatened the lad and there seemed to be no friend at hand to assume his support and education, Dr. Hatcher came to his rescue. The Herald thus tells the story:

"Dr. Hatcher has one more burden on his shoulders, though some think he was overloaded before. Dr. Graves, at Canton, China, our veteran missionary sent over, in charge of Brother R. E. Chambers, a sprightly Chinese boy to be educated. The lad's name is Ah Fong Yeung. He is fifteen years old, a son of Dr. Graves' assistant, is himself a Baptist and has been three years in an English school in Canton. He hopes to enter Richmond College but as he is not ready for that Dr. Hatcher is asked to take him to the Fork Union Academy. This he has done though he says he will have to look to the Lord and the Baptists for the money. Who will help him? One brother gives five dollars to start with. Let us help train this boy for christian service in his native land."

Soon after Dr. Hatcher's decision to help Ah Fong, the boy was taken around to Dr. Hatcher's study and there he met the one who was to be his friend through many years. He thus describes his visit:

Digitized by Google

"The first time I met Dr. Hatcher was in the pastor's study of the Grace Street Baptist Church. Mr. R. E. Chambers went with me. Dr. Hatcher asked me my name and age. He then asked: 'Do you know how to read?' I replied:

" 'Yes, Sir; a little.'

"He gave me a passage from the Bible to read. When I finished he said:

" 'That's fine. Are you homesick?'

" 'I didn't know what home-sick meant; so he explained it to me. He again asked:

" 'Have you any more clothes and shoes?"

"Maybe what I had on did not suit his taste; but I replied:

" 'Yes sir; I have on a pair of shoes and wearing some clothes.'

"He smiled at my answer and said:

" 'Now I want you to go out with me for a little while.'

"He went with me to a shoes' store on Broad Street and bought me a pair of fine shoes; then he went with me to a clothier and there bought me a suit of clothes, a stiff bosom shirt with blue stripes and a white collar. I was then the happiest boy on earth. On leaving him he said:

" 'I will call on you in a few days.'

"Two days afterwards—Thanksgiving Day it was and about two o'clock—Dr. Hatcher came around to Clay Street where I was staying with Rev. R. E. Chambers' mother-in-law. He said:

" 'My boy, are you happy? I want to take you to my home and introduce you to the members of my family.'

"I went with him. I saw there Mrs. Hatcher, Miss Orie and Miss Edith. When we entered he told them: 'This is my Chinese friend—Ah Fong Yeung and I want you all to be good to him.' We were in the dining room. The reason I remember it was Thanksgiving Day is because Miss Orie asked me if I would like to have some turkey. I said:

" 'No thank you.'

"Miss Orie thought that I did not know what a turkey was, so she asked:

" 'Do you know what a turkey is?'

"I replied: 'Something like a chicken.'

"About half an hour afterward he took me back to Mrs. Hall's home. On the way back he asked:

" 'Would you like to live with me?'

"I said: 'Yes Sir.'

Digitized by Google

"Then he said: 'In a few days I will come for you again and you will then be a member of my family. In the meantime I want you to be a good boy. I dont want you to get home-sick—do you know what home-sick is now?—I want you to be always happy and cheerful?'

"In a few days he came around again.

" 'Well, how is my friend? Are you happy? Are you ready to go to my home now? All right, I will get some one to come for your belongings after awhile.'

"From that day on I have been a member of his family. About two weeks afterwards he asked me to make a speech about myself. I did and he corrected it and he himself copied it for me from the typewriter. He then trained me to say that speech. My oratorical training began right here. He asked me to sing some Chinese songs for him at night when he was not busy. I did. The songs I sang that he liked the best were: 'Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light.' 'Ring the bells of Heaven.' When he polished me up a bit he tried me out at his Sunday afternoon Boys Meeting."

Ah Fong wrote another speech,—this time about the boys in China and it ran as follows:

"Some of the Chinese boys do not go to school, not because he is poor and not because his parents not like it, but because he dont like to go to school but he only likes to play all day long and to throw the rocks. This boy when he grow up a man, then he will be a beggar and so many boys like that in Canton. But I hope you all don't do that and I hope you all boys like to go to school, when you grow up to be useful men in this world."

At the bottom of this little speech are written the words: "Miss Edith Logwood Hatcher required me to do that and she said 'If you not do that, I will not teach you.' "

Another boy whom he was aiding in his education at this time was "Aubrey" who is referred to in the following letter to his daughter Elizabeth at Fork Union:

"I hope to see you Monday. I suppose that I will bring up the Baptist Chinaman. He spent yesterday afternoon with us and was quite a stunning event in the household.

Digitized by Google

"Tell Tommie and Aubrey that their letters are monumentally fine. I had to read them to others. Possibly one was better than the other but who can tell which it was."

What had become of his Caroline boy,—Coleman, whom several years before, he had taken into his home and educated? A year or two before this, Coleman had caught the war fever and sped away with the army to the Philippines, but a letter came at this time which brought good cheer to Dr. Hatcher. It was to Mrs. Hatcher and read as follows:

"Pozarrubio Luzon, P. I., December 18, 1900.

"Dear Mrs. Hatcher,—I think of you every day and remember all your great kindness and the more I think of it the more I appreciate what you have done for me.

"Please give my love to Dr. H. and tell him that I am coming back to Virginia some day and do all in my power to wipe out any regret that he may feel at having taken in the little orphan boy eight years ago.

"I am saving up money with which to go to school when I come back.

"Dont give up all hope in me yet. I sent you a box of relics about six months ago which I thought might interest you. Hope you received them O. K.

"Ever Your Friend,
"J. Coleman M———."
"Care Regimental Hospital
"13th U. S. Infantry.
"Manila, P. I."

January 6th, 1901, was one of the golden days of his life. On that day occured the dedication of his completed church building. For two years his people had been worshipping in the Sunday School room, but their beautiful auditorium was now finished. It was a day crowded with bright incidents. Telegrams, letters and messages were received; Dr. Battle the pastor and some of his members came over from their Baptist Church in Petersburg to present their congratulations.

"Indeed" says the newspaper "Dr. Hatcher came near apologizing for the rare and exquisite loveliness of the building."

Digitized by Google

In one of the services, "Dr. H. A. Bagby gave the congregation a genuine surprise by breaking into the service just after the dedicatory prayer and presenting to Dr. Hatcher a case of silver,—a costly and elegant gift—from the Baptist pastors of the city." One of the features of the dedicatory exercises was a speech by his Chinese boy, whom he trained for the occasion. With his united, devoted church and his magnificent building he faced a radiant future but,—though he hardly suspected it—he was on the threshold of a crisis.

The dedication was scarcely ended before sickness laid him upon his back and while he was in this condition, there came a call from Richmond College that he would enter the educational field as its representative. He had received such an offer in the Fall from the College, but had replied that he could not accept it. But now—now when an almost ideal pastoral opportunity opened before him,—his Alma Mater had renewed her appeal. For ten years he had been struggling for an adequate church edifice and his dream was at last realized, and yet his strained shoulders were keenly feeling the weight of the burden. Shortly before this, when he and his wife were walking through the new auditorium and she was congratulating him on having such a large and splendid audience room in which to preach in the future, he remarked: "Yes, and I am afraid it will kill me trying to fill it."

"I'm sick and full of suffering this week" he writes me on January 25th. "The Grippe has used me badly and for several days I have been in torture from acute rheumatism. . . I wish I could see the little Norfolk family. Can't you send Wm. E. Jr. up for a little visit?"

Orie adds to this note "Can't you come yourself? I think it would cheer him."

"Your father" writes my mother on the 27th "suffers a good deal and I think wants you to come. He seems more depressed than I ever saw him. Cheerful company will do him good—but he is too weak to see many. . . Will expect you today."

Digitized by Google

GRANDFATHER AND WILLIAM

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

He had been ordered off to Careby for quiet and rest and there he wrestled with his trio,—Rheumatism, Grippe and the College call. His beloved friend Dr. Charles Ryland, wrote him regarding the College matter:

"I think I can see how out of this there may grow a yet more general movement for a consolidation of all Baptist interests and the coordination of the Baptist schools. I believe God has put it in my mind and heart to urge upon you this work and I cannot be quiet.

"You know how dear you are to me. I would not do anything to hurt you, or to impair your influence. I would put a crown upon it. The crown is at the end of a great educational uplift by your leadership.

"Charles."

The invitation brought him to deep reflection. His life-long friend, Dr. J. R. Bagby, a trustee of the College, wrote him:

"And if you are to leave your great church ever it would be greatly better for the church and for you to do it while in the zenith of its glory. So you see how I feel. It is too big a question for me. I do not know what to say to one so dear to me as your dear self. . . Somehow I feel that this would be a splendid doxology to your richly useful life."

He was now 67 years of age and his shoulders told him that they could not carry a large city pastorate for many more years. He said to me shortly after this, as we were walking one day away from his church: "The details of the pastorate are too heavy for me." His passion for "going" seemed to increase year by year. The position which was offered him by the College threw open to him the door of travel and gave him Virginia as his field, Virginia Baptists as his constituency, with Richmond as his headquarters, and with unlimited opportunity for preaching and speaking. And so it came to pass that on Sunday morning, March 24th he spoke the fateful words to his fair and noble church with which he had been bound together in such a long and happy relationship. The church was smitten dumb with grief. He promised to remain

Digitized by Google

with them two months thus slowly untying the knot that had held them so sweetly. There was a double ingredient in his cup of sadness, for he felt that he was not only taking final leave of Grace Street Church but also of the pastorate. Is it surprising, therefore, that his wife should write: "Your father . . . is more knocked up by the severance of the church ties than I thought he would be. Heroic as he is he feels it very much." Again she writes:

"Your father brought him [Dr. Dunaway] to dinner today. What will he do when he cannot invite his friends to 608 W. Grace. It is all right to call a halt for a time."

To Edith, who was in New York pursuing a special course in music, he writes:

"I have been alone in the house this week. The furniture has either gone the way of its destination or is at least packed and ready for going. Times are lonely."

His Chinese boy, Ah Fong, tells of an interesting service:

"I remember when he resigned from Grace Street Baptist Church. We had to move to the country, Fork Union. He had the Grace Street Church boys to hold their last meeting. That night the whole church was there. To my surprise it was mostly for me. Dr. Hatcher had some of the boys make speeches—bade me Godspeed, and had the boys to present me some presents. Of course I had to make a little speech—it was written by Dr. Hatcher. I remember that speech had a sentence like this: 'I am not ashamed to confess that I am a Chinese boy, for no boy ought to be ashamed of his country.' When he trained me on the speech and came to this sentence.—I might have said it without much energy, because he said: 'Are you ashamed of China?' I answered: 'No.' " 'Then say it out like you mean it.' he said."

His final Sabbath at Grace Street was a sorrowful and a never-to-be-forgotten day, and on the next night there was a reception at which his wife said she supposed she shook hands with a thousand people. "Once or twice" said she "I thought

Digitized by Google

I would have to drop out and have a big cry." The reader need not be told that those were days when hearts were strained and if many a pang found its way into the pastor's soul who could be surprised or blame him. His church had never been more devoted to him than it was at that time and it was never in better condition, but he felt that duty now pointed him to the educational work. He waved his church a loving farewell, blessed them with his tender benedictions and moved out into his new field of labor with a bouyant step, and a hopeful heart. In his parting words to his church he said:

"When I was installed as pastor here twenty-six years ago I said to the church that I would seek to be a good pastor, but that it must be understood that my labors could not be restricted to any one church. My heart was filled with larger things and I felt that my call was to help every good cause so far as it came in my power. This I have done. Some have blamed me for giving so much time to other things, but I really could not help it. The cry of the orphan, the lost condition of the nations of the earth, the education of the ministry, the needs of the country churches and the appeals of our pastors and missionaries for my assistance were orders from heaven to me. I could not disregard them.

"As I recall my activity in this way, I ask my self whether I robbed the church in order to do this out-side work. I do not think so. If I had narrowly clung to my post, going nowhere, helping nothing, getting all and giving nothing, I do not believe that this church would be better than it is today, for much of the life I put into this church I drew from other things."

Even during these stressful days engagements were pulling him out into the state. He delivered at the funeral of Dr. C. L. Cocke of Hollins Institute an address which Dr. Hudnall of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute declared was the greatest address he ever heard. At the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans in May he found himself in a little friendly "tussle" in one of the sessions of the body.

"But we had it lively on the New Board Business. X——— and Z——— led one side and I was with the opposition.

Digitized by Google

They had the Goliah swagger and we were scared to our toes. But we planned in secret and won on the field. They were pitiful to behold and I was really concerned about poor Y———— He is in nervous prostration."

One day at the Convention at New Orleans he took Dr. C. S. Gardner aside and as they walked arm in arm he said to him:

"Dr. Gardner you are to be my successor at Grace Street."
"Oh Doctor" he replied "I cannot succeed you. I cannot attempt to fill your place at Grace Street. When I was a student at Richmond College I used to sit in the gallery at Grace Street church and hear your sermons and say to the students with me: 'Oh if I could some day preach like Dr. Hatcher.' 'No, Doctor, I could not take your place at Grace Street.'"

While he was in the throes of changing from Grace Street to Richmond College he was stunned by the news of the death of one of his most cherished friends,—Dr. H. H. Wyer. He writes as follows and his words give us another picture of that "passion for friendship", which burned so deeply in his soul.

"Ah, here, indeed, is cause for tears. My friend for forty-four years, Dr. Henry H. Wyer, has closed his eyes on earthly scenes and gone to the land of his hope. My heart melts to call up this wintry night all my preacher friends but it cannot be invidious now to say that of all of them Wyer was the most loving and had in the highest degree, the art for cheering me in my cares and toils.

"Who can tell,—truly I cannot,—the gentle sorrows that have filled my heart since the tidings came. Our life together has come back to me like a book, often read, and I have turned the pages, here and there, and read them with moistened eyes.

"I said in the beginning that brother Wyer, of all my friends, loved me best. It has a selfish sound to speak of this, but I was irresistibly drawn to him by his manifest affection for me. Some on the card of my friendship I have had at times to doubt, but I never had a doubt of Wyer. He was chary enough in avowing his love but he was shining it out all the time. A day with him, was a fattening season for me. He could scatter the blues on a rainy day and, as for his letters they were honeycomb to my taste. His bosom was a rest for my head.

Digitized by Google

"I suppose that my friend had faults, but in some way, from the time we got interlinked at the old Strawberry, I never had any success in locating these faults. If he was not perfect he was far out that way and is there by now. I wave my greetings to his triumphant spirit as it enters the Celestial city. He makes Heaven more interesting. A little further on we will meet again. Until then, dear friend, good bye."

His new educational work looms before him. It was twofold first, that of raising $75,000 to meet the conditional offer of $25,000 from the Rockefeller fund; and the second phase of his work, he declared, meant far more than mere money raising. He said it embraced "the thought of a thorough revival of our people in educational movements and the gathering of our schools into a common fellowship and in putting them in shape for fulfilling their destiny." In one sense his new position was that of Pastor-at-large, and by his preaching, his addresses and his personal intercourse he was to make his ministry as wide as the state and even much wider. To turn from pastoral to educational work required a mental realignment. It could not be surprising if the heart was slower in its readjustments than the brain. We cannot hurry the closing scenes of a twenty-six years' pastorate and we need not think it strange if some of Dr. Hatcher's letters at this time ran somewhat thus:

To Kate:

"I am trying to get my work in hand. It is a violent change in my life and I am oppressed with concern as to the result. But I have a simple purpose to do what I can and to leave the rest in the keeping of the Lord."

To his wife on June 11th:

"I am not as strong in my nerves as I formerly was and am having some anxiety in trying to adjust myself to my work. But I must keep serene and trust in the Lord."

"I am still in the agonies of moving" he writes "I brought up two loads today [to the College]—one the rubbish and the other the bed. I am in a whirl of confusion and not very

Digitized by Google

cheerful today. I spent my last night in the house. It was a restless night and I have been nervous."

In a few days, however, he was out upon the highway with his face towards his new task. He had in the last years of his life an ambition to increase his speed to the end rather than to lessen it. While others were speaking of "retiring" and of spending the "evening of their life" in a certain rest and calm, he yearned for just the opposite method of closing his career. His hope was that he could work up to the last moment and that, like the racer, he could gather in momentum as he sped forward, being swiftest in crossing the final line and could leap from the race track into the other world with the glow and vigor of the race upon him.

His immediate work was a campaign to raise $75,000. The Rockefeller Board had offered the College $25,000, provided the College would raise $75,000 by January 1st and to the raising of this sum he now set his hand. He went to the Summer Associations, the first being the Dover, where his address—according to the Herald—"was so masterful and conclusive, interpreting so intelligently the true significance of the paper which the committee had brought in that it left nothing to be said". He was also at the Shiloh Association eagerly pressing his new work:

"Dr. W. E. Hatcher of America was on hand" says the Herald "full of wit and good humor and overflowing with his great task—our great undertaking for our College. So versatile and broad—so wise a leader and so magnetic a personality is our own beloved Hatcher that his name is a household word in every home and his plea for education is masterly and all-prevailing."

The Portsmouth was the last of the Summer Associations which he attended.

"But I think the climax of the whole session" says the Herald "was that masterly speech and plea made by our beloved brother Hatcher. At first he spoke with but little

Digitized by Google

CAREBY HALL
The Fork Union Home

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

animation, but, as he advanced, the audience, seemed to fall into sympathy with the speaker and to catch inspiration as he described vividly and eloquently the needs and claims of Richmond College. He arose higher and higher and finally his torrent of heart appeals swept the audience up with him and as we all came down together the sum of $3,500 was pledged and, what is far better, Dr. Hatcher sealed forever the hearts of the great audience for our own beloved College. Let us rejoice and take courage."

Two of his letters to children written during these days of strain have been preserved,—the first to his granddaughter Virginia, at Careby, where all his grandchildren were gathered for the Summer. His stock of grandchildren had now increased to three, the two new ones being Katherine, the daughter of Kate and William E. Jr.,—my own son. To Virginia he writes:

"How is my happy little charmer? I long to give you a kiss and a hug. I am far up in the mountains but it is burning hot up here. I wish you would kiss my lovely Katherine and tell her I want to see her. You must be very good to Wm. E. Jr. He is fat and fretful but he is fine. Then he is 'our boy' and we must treat him well."

The other letter was written to his little namesake who was at that time only about one or two years old, the son of his cherished friend, Mr. J. R. Dickie, of Bristol, Va., who kindly sent me a copy of the letter:

"Sept. 5th, 1901.

"Master Earnest Hatcher Dickie:

"My Dear Namesake,—I have your picture on my mantle in my office and I give you regular and affectionate greetings, whenever I am at home. You are well formed, perfectly quiet day and night, and never give me the least trouble. You showed great kindness—though not much gumption—in deciding to be my namesake. You ought to have associated your name with a better man, and but for your extreme youth and possibly some bad prompting on the part of your biassed kindred, I believe you would have struck the earth with some resounding name like "Gladstone," or "Edward the Eighth."

Digitized by Google

"But my dear namesake I do not complain. Indeed I feel quite tickled about the whole affair and accept you as one of my blood kin. We must be friendly with each other and seek to improve on our ancestry which, while fairly good, was not a circumstance to what we must try to be. I fear that I will not be much in the way of lifting you up, but you are so large and royal that I expect to rise by clinging to the skirts of your garments which I charitably suppose will grow shorter as you grow longer. You showed great prescience—an innate love of congruity—in being born at the crumbling edge of a dying century. You must have meant by it to say that you ask for a clean new deal, and did not wish to be mixed up with the confusion and misdoings of the past. Good for you my, wonderfully handsome namesake. You start strong and happy and I am praying that you may increase in strength and wisdom to the end. You may decide to remain on earth longer than I do, and, if so, I will expect you to guard my memory and take up my work. I want you to get a high, fine education and then use it in helping others to be educated. Do not forget this. I am not sure that you will be able to read this, for I am not a clear writer and several persons of your age have indicated to me that they could not decipher my writings and several of these youthful personages have taken letters and things which I wrote and torn them up as if in very contempt. You must behave better than that. Have this letter read to you by one of your still extant ancestors, and then later tell me how you like me. I expect you will like me for I like my self tolerably well, though my feeling is modified by my too intimate knowledge of myself. I want you to know me, but not too intimately at first. It might cause trouble between us.

"There is one thing on which we must surely stand together. Ever since I was a boy I have been a lover of Jesus Christ. I know him well and have seen the good things that he has done for others and for me and I think we must put him above everybody, even our Mothers. As soon as possible I want you to know him and I will tell Him about you and ask him to look after you. They know Him at your house and will tell you about Him.

"Your Namesake,
"William Eldridge Hatcher."

His experience with this fine little lad had some later chapters. When he grew older he and Dr. Hatcher became fast

Digitized by Google

friends and one night at the supper table the little fellow heard his papa say that Dr. Hatcher would reach Bristol that night and was coming to their house. The father said that as Dr. Hatcher's arrival would be considerably after their supper was over he would meet the Doctor at the train and if he had not gotten his supper on the train that he would take him to a restaurant for his supper. Little Earnest, in some way, picked up the idea that there might be some uncertainty about Doctor Hatcher getting his supper. When, an hour or so later, his mother was putting him to bed, and came to take off his clothes she found his blouse bulging with a good supply of biscuits which the little fellow informed her he was keeping for Dr. Hatcher's supper.

Mr. Dickie says that he wrote Dr. Hatcher, inviting him to pay him a visit at his winter home in Florida, and Dr. Hatcher replied regretfully that he could not come, saying: "Poverty has always been one of my besetting sins."

His labors for the College were interspersed with dedicatory sermons and all manner of ministerial activities. He had two or three boys in his Fork Union home at this time whom he was helping in their education and who often gave him much pleasure in the progress they made; but sometimes they would try his patience. And yet when he had once taken a boy in hand he rarely lost hope of him. He thus writes to his wife after reaching Richmond from Careby Hall:

"I was distressed to see that X———— was sulky and unhappy last week. He has been spoiled lately and you must keep him away from the public. He needs to avoid excitement and be kept at work. Tell him that I grieve very much that he was not bright and pleasant when I was there. I intend to treat him kindly but he must not put on airs. He must be humble and pleasant. Things may go wrong with him but he must not be sitting around looking mad. I cannot stand that. Do not let others know when you have any bother with him. We must be patient with him and not be discouraged by any boyish follies he may show."

Digitized by Google

To his great pleasure Dr. C. S. Gardner became his successor at Grace Street Church and had a pastoral career there that was very successful. Dr. Hatcher, soon after he had resigned the Grace Street pastorate, was taken sick at the home of one of his members and while lying on the couch became delirious and suddenly he called out, "Whether I live or die, Gardner must be pastor of Grace Street: Gardner must be pastor of Grace Street." The church had then not settled upon any one for pastor. This remark of Dr. Hatcher was heard by members of the family.

After Dr. Gardner had entered upon his pastorate Dr. Hatcher, in pleasant banter, said to him one day: "Gardner, you would never have gotten to Grace Street if I had not called you when I was delirious."

The whole world had been shocked by the shooting of President McKinley, but the tidings went forth that his wound was healing and that he would recover. It was accordingly planned by the Cabinet at Washington and the Directors of the Buffalo Exposition to hold two Thanksgiving services in honor of the President's expected recovery. Six men from different sections of the United States, were selected as the speakers and Dr. Hatcher was one of the men invited. But alas, the beloved president did not recover and, in the place of the expected thanksgiving, came, in a few days, the universal mourning.

The "Rockefeller Campaign"—as the present College effort to raise the $75.000 was called—now waxed warm. January 1st began to loom dangerously near and yet only a small portion of the amount had been raised. The Herald put one of its pages at his disposal and every week he filled the page with breezy items about the campaign.

"His soul is on fire to get the money" writes my mother the later part of November. "He has been through similar, though not equal, experiences before, in the building of his church when everything was made subsidiary to the one idea. I am hoping that his health may not succumb to it. If he can only have his health we shall be thankful. He reminds me of

Digitized by Google

the man in quest of the ancient pottery art—I cant call his name now—who was reduced to the straits of burning his own furniture to keep up the fire in the furnace where he was seeking to melt the old pottery. Such determination, with faith, must succeed.

"He came over here [at Mr. W. R. Jones' in Richmond] and enjoyed a game of backgammon immensely. It would have done you good to hear him 'halloa' when he gammoned Mr. Jones. He needs more such recreation, but he will not take it now."

That was a campaign indeed. He sprang into the fray with the ardor and dash of a boy. He sniffed the air of battle and liked it. "That $75,000" said he "must be raised". From the College he directed the movement and yet he also hurried from point to point throughout the state, speaking and holding conferences with individuals. By pen and tongue he kept the Virginia Baptists on the qui vive as to the final out come. When the last day arrived the telegraph and telephone wires were called into requisition and when the clock struck twelve that night the goal had been reached.

"The contents of the mails on the last days of December" he writes. "were quite amazing. By noon on the 30th it was clear that there was a sacred landslide in favor of the $75,000, and before midnight on the 31st the Endowment Committee had had its meeting, examined its receipts and decided that the contest had been settled on the right side. The $75,000 has been secured and Mr. Rockefeller's offer accepted in a substantial and satisfactory way."

To his beloved Careby he sped after the wind-up of the campaign and bathed his soul in its quiet and its beauty. He had an interesting experience with Ah Fong who tells of it as follows:

"I remember the Christmas of 1901. All the folks went away to the city and all the boys at Careby went home. So I was the only person to guard Careby Hall in the country. A few days after Christmas Dr. Hatcher wrote me a postal saying that he will come that day to see 'my boy'. He came

Digitized by Google

on the night train. It so happened that Aubrey Hudgins came back that day; so he went to Bremo to meet him, while I went to a Christmas party at Mr. Sadler's home with full intention to come back at nine o'clock to see Dr. Hatcher. I was, however, too much taken up with the jovilities of the Christmas party that I did not get home until two next morning. I got up early next morning and went directly to Dr. Hatcher's room, fully expecting a hearty welcome; on the contrary I was received very coolly.

" 'Where were you last night?'

"I told him I was at a Christmas party.

"He said: 'I expected to have a little party last night with you, but I was greatly disappointed. I have bought some cakes, oranges, banannas, candies and lots of good things, but no one was here to enjoy them with me.'

"Then we walked out to the yard and there were some chunks of wood lying on the ground. They were thrown out by ———— from their windows when they could not put them into their stoves. When Dr. Hatcher saw the woods he began to scold me, because he thought I had thrown those pieces of woods out of the window. He gave me a lecture on an ungrateful boy. After a little while Aubrey came to my rescue and told him the exact truth. Then he said:

" 'I am going to Cifax [in Bedford county] this afternoon; do you want to go with me? Lewis Thompson ask you to come to see him this Christmas.' I told him that I will go with him, but he did not give me any of the good things which he intended for me that Christmas."

With the Rockefeller campaign brought to a close he devoted himself now to the larger and to the general phases of his work. There were several Baptist schools in the state in addition to Richmond College. Some of these institutions were on trembling foundations and there seemed a need for a better denominational understanding regarding these schools and a closer cooperation among them. To the questions growing out of this situation and also to the general work of Christian education, within the bounds of his denomination in the state, he now devoted himself.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXV

1902—1903

HIS GRANDCHILDREN. SUNDAY SCHOOL LECTURES. VERSATILITY. THE CAMPAIGN FOR BRISTOL. CHRISTMAS REUNION. PATIENCE WITH BOYS. SAINT JOSEPH, MO. EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS.

A fresh chapter had already been opened in his life and that was his experience with his three grandchildren. Their arrival on the scene introduced him into a new world of happiness,—and when the Summer put in its appearance each year he began to clamor for them.

"It might possibly be well for you to say to Wm. E. Jr." he writes to my wife "that the sordid dust, whose name he adorns hopes to podder in upon him Friday night in time to see him put to bed—or words to that effect."

He delivered at this time a course of lectures at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. The Sunday School Board, in conjunction with the Seminary Faculty, decided to inaugurate a series of lectures to be delivered each year at the Seminary on "The Sunday School" and they asked Dr. Hatcher to deliver the opening series. Dr. J. M. Frost, the Secretary of the Board, wrote him that his forthcoming addresses at the Seminary would enable him "to set the tune for the whole Baptist brotherhood of the South on the great Sunday School question."

He delivered five addresses which were said to be epoch-making in Sunday School work in the South. The lectures, which had as their general subject, "The

Digitized by Google

Pastor and the Sunday School", were five in number and treated of the following subjects:

1. "The pastor at the Door". Under this head he said: "We may rightly challenge the pastor at the door of the Sunday School and ask to examine his credentials. Before he enters let him approve himself worthy of a place in the School."
2. "The Pastor on the Inside."
3. "The Pastor Abroad". "Nowhere is the pastor more pleasant to behold than when we catch sight of him as, quitting his closet, dropping book and pen, parting from family and company, he sallies forth to see the people."
4. "The pulpit and the Sunday School". "It remains for us in this closing lecture in the series to study the work of the pastor in harvesting the fruit of the Sunday School."

The following are some paragraphs culled from his lectures:

"It is, I confess, with a blush that I appear on this platform with a manuscript in hand. It is an outrage upon my own record and a dangerous example for this community and my comfort is that my own awkward manipulation of this formidable document may prove an example for warning and not for imitation."

"Ah, the coming of the pastor [into the Sunday School] ought to be the sunlight of heaven to that school. The smile on his face, the cordial handshake, the bouyant words, his whole personality, next to the unction of the Holy Spirit, ought to constitute the crowning glory of the school."

"These country folks are a sight, I tell you. They can sample a man, relentlessly reduce him to his original elements and weigh and label the ingredients at their market value."

"The worst thing that can get on a minister's coat is a debt and that dress suits the pastor best which is so complete that it escapes observation."

"It is well for us to understand that the most of life is wrapped up, not in our individuality, but in our relationship. Our chief joys as well as out impartations of power, are transmitted to us along the ties which bind us to others."

Digitized by Google

"A pastor can afford to study closely for five years in order to catch the art of speaking seriously and effectively to children."

"I confess that I was always ashamed of my doings as a pastor,—it was always so far below the standard. I was ashamed that I did so little—did that little so imperfectly — did so much to discredit the little done—had motives so mixed, had sermons meanly made and stupidly preached, made visits so unmeaning, and purposeless, played with my studies, drooped in my prayers, had so little fruit harvested and that so languidly, loved my people so little and gave them so little reason for loving me, frittered away my time and lost chances all the way. . . . I almost quiver with the masterful hope that if I could enter the list [of pastors] again I would touch the radiant crown of the mount of the faithful. But, No; it is not for me. They give no second trials. But young man yonder is the mountain, yonder the winding track, yonder the climbers; go in, go in with flying feet and in the name of the Lord, and you may be the first to see the sun set from the mountain top."

"But no preacher need ever to hope to discover the wants of his church by simply using the pulpit for his observatory."

"But, it is hardly too much to say that a boy will get more out of a sermon even when he does not listen, and retain more at least than old people, when they do listen. I have sometimes said that the children can absorb more than they hear and it is true, beyond a doubt, that they can fidget, whisper, gaze around, pinch and scratch each other and indulge many sly smiles and yet carry away a deal of the sermon. They catch the truth on the fly.

"Once I preached on Sunday morning on the Christian armor and gave each piece of the armor and defined the purpose of each of these parts. That afternoon, at the Boys Society which was one of the established organizations of the church for over twenty-five years, I questioned the boys as to the armor. It was gratifying to find that many of them could name every part and state what it was intended to represent. They had not expected to be examined."

"As a fact people cannot long endure a compact, intense, burning sermon—it wears them out. Deep impressions must be made quickly, or not at all."

"It is the princeliest deed of the Christian life to save a soul."

Digitized by Google

"It is a marvel how he has the strength for all his various undertakings." said Dr. E. Y. Mullins regarding Dr. Hatcher's busy life at this time. My mother wrote from Careby: "Your father certainly needed the rest which he is getting here. He has been on the bed most of the time and sleeps as soon as he touches it." He said that the preparation of his Sunday School Notes for the Baptist Teacher each week was a taste of sermon making to him that was very sweet. He was now writing his Sunday School lectures for publication in book form,—"a huge task to be done in two weeks." Regarding this book when it appeared the "Baptist and Reflector" said: "Dr. Hatcher, as a writer, is among the happiest in power of expression and practical thought in America. His name to a book is all that is needed. . . To find a match for W. E. Hatcher you will likely search more than one continent."

"To the boundless torture of my toe" he writes Elizabeth at Fork Union, "I have gotten some butter ready for you. It comes up this morning."

The startling fact about his life, however, was not its variety, but its versatility. He won distinction not by being a worker in so many departments but by being a specialist in so many departments. He had a "passion for the best". There were some spheres for which he was not fitted and he would make no pretensions in that direction. He felt that he had no talent for clerical, or secretarial, labor and he would declare: "I have no sense in such work," or "When it comes to that I am stupidity personified". But when he once entered a path he sought to keep in the lead. "What a multiform specialist was the Nestor of the Virginia ministry", said Dr. Hudnall, "preacher, pastor, evangelist, editor, writer, author, educator, and this is not all. To be of vast usefulness in various directions a man must needs possess, in an eminent degree, a rare combination of qualities. . . An eminent divine said of Dr. Hatcher: 'He did everything with distinction.'"

"He was a great debater" says Dr. George B. Taylor, "a clear thinker, a preacher of unusual power, a master of assem-

Digitized by Google

blies, a wondeful raconteur, a quick discerner and a discriminating portrayer of human nature, a delightful companion, a wise counselor, a charming writer."

He would have made an incomparable United States Senator," said Dr. P. T. Hale "a brilliant and successful lawyer, and would have adorned the tripod in the editorial sanctum of the greatest journal."

"It will require many, many men" writes Dr. Landrum "to give us a life-size portrait, for Dr. Hatcher was a many-sided man, and will be fully known and properly interpreted only when all his friends have joined their eulogistic labors."

Dr. J. M. Frost writes in similiar vein:

"His life was too many-sided, too diversified and full, covered too large a territory and too many years for any one man to even outline and put down in print for the reader."

It is interesting to note the realms in which he was eminent. As preacher and pastor and writer he was accorded first place. When it came to taking collections, or to dedicating churches, or to having a capacity for friendship, or to finding recreation in gaming, or to dealing with boys, or to endulging in wit or humor, in fact, as Dr. Frost says—"think of him as you may you readily accord him the leadership as if that were his specialty." Some of the most restless moments of his life were probably those when he saw some one outstripping him.

From Warrenton where he was conducting revival meetings he wrote the first of a long list of letters to his grandson, William E. Jr.

"Warrenton, Va., March 30, 1902.

"My Matchless Wm. E., Jr.,—Your grandmother sent me your picture today. It was quite fine and showed that you were in blooming health. I do not recall that the original Wm. E. ever had his picture taken when eighteen months old and if it had been done I am not sure that he would have shown to such superb advantage as you do. But that is not to be wondered at—Wm. E's are improving stock—they get better every time and the Wm. E's of the future will be simply wonderful—

Digitized by Google

at least more wonderful than the present Wm. E's, though the present Wm. E's are beyond all doubt full-orbed wonders. There are none others like them,—though I must admit that the servant [William's mother] who had you in her lap when your picture was taken has a striking face.

"Give your father great love and tell him that he is fortunate in being the parent of a Wm. E. but that he must suffer often from the feeling that he can never be a Wm. E. That is a link above his jump.

"Grandfather has been sick—an insignificant thing and now it is over.

"With much pomp and love.
"Wm. E. 1."

He would often write speeches and dialogues for the boys at the Academy Commencement and frequently would train them, though his daughter Elizabeth rendered very valuable service in this regard. "Do your best on the boys" he writes to Elizabeth "and have them on hand for me Tuesday afternoon [for his rehearsing them]. Put Ah Fong along on his speech." At this Commencement Lieut. Gov. Willard (present Embassador to Spain) addressed the boys. "Great times at Fork Union" he wrote me, "Aubrey took the glories." Aubrey was one of the boys in his home whose entire support and education he was carrying and of course he was delighted to see one of his proteges thus triumphant.

Out at Bristol was a great Baptist School with splendid buildings but with a debt that threatened financial collapse. $12,000 was needed to save the day and Dr. Hatcher, being asked by the Education Commission to undertake the raising of that amount, set himself to the task.

The family decided to give him a House Party on his 68th birthday in July. He asked that it be given on his brother Harvey's birthday which would occur a few days later, and this plan was followed. The two brothers reveled in each others' company. Harvey, two years his senior, came on from Georgia. Other guests were on hand,—some of them his kindred from Bedford. Dr. Boatwright, President of Richmond

Digitized by Google

College, wrote him that every one of his birthdays "marked an epoch in Southern Baptist history."

The Birthday gathering had its sorrowful aspect also. He writes: "The meeting of my kindred after such long separations played heavily upon my heart. My soul was stormed all the time with memories and heartaches as I thought of my friends and loved ones who were not there to greet me." On the second birthday of his grandson he writes:

"My Beloved William,—I greet you on your birthday and wish you peace and honor. It is a most interesting experience to be two years old and you will have to show yourself a fine specimen of a boy. A blubbering two year old, is not a pleasing sight. . . I must remind you that it is now time that you were learning to talk. Grunts and cries are cute and fascinating to blinded mothers but I remind you that they are not good English.

"Begin to get ready for the future. You will be expected to take a large and laborious part in the affairs of this world and you must get ready for it. I hope that you may be a minister of the gospel, as your father and grandfather are, and as both of your great grandfathers were. But the Lord must decide that. Fear and follow him and he will show you the path of duty.

"Your devoted Grandfather, W. E. H."

He spends a few days in restful fellowship with his life-long friend, Dr. J. R. Bagby at Mr. Floyd Moon's in Cumberland County, and writes me: "You know not yet the value of an old friendship. You may know hereafter." "Ah, how good it feels" says Longfellow "the hand of an old friend. King James used to call for his old shoes—they were easiest for his feet." As Dr. Hatcher grew older he turned more eagerly to those friends of his early days.

For the next three or four months he labored for Bristol. He resolved that he would never again undertake such emergency work. "That Rockefeller business told on me severly" he writes "and now I am going through the racking agonies of Bristol." To Edith he wrote, in December, "I have worn

Digitized by Google

my soul to frazzles in working for Bristol and am yet in great terror lest disaster is to be my only reward. It looks that way now." Men do their work best when the work is congenial. But in his case his campaigns for money went against his grain. Just a short while before this, in telling of his joy in preaching, he said: "It is a bigger thing to save souls than to flounder around in this hard world looking for money." And yet his sunny optimism came to his rescue. No doleful note touched his lips in his journeys. The College was a kind master, and was wonderfully appreciative and sympathetic towards him in his work.

Christmas was one of the high peaks in the year for him because it meant a family reunion at Careby. The grandchildren were his best medicine and he could fling his burdens to the winds in his revels with the children. He would begin each day with a frolic. Every morning before the family were dressed—or even out of bed—he would step to his door and shout through the capacious house: "Vir-gin-y-a-h-h!! Kath-rin-n-n!! Wil-yum-m-m!!" and as the sound went ringing up stairs and into the rooms what a flutter it would cause! Up from the bed would jump Virginia and Katherine and William—all in a tremor of expectancy—and such a scampering down stairs there would be—not waiting to be dressed but hurrying to grandfather's room, for they knew there were "goodies" and royal talks with grandfather awaiting them. They were a hilarious group as they jumped into grandfather's bed and kept up a ceaseless chatter as the good things began rapidly to disappear.

He had already trained them how they should answer his morning summons. When he called out "Virginia" she was expected to answer from her room immediately "All right: I'm coming" and so with the other two. Sometimes the suddenly awakened grandchild would utter a feeble, "I'm coming" which would not reach the ears of grandfather, and so there would come another resounding call: "Vir-gin-yeh-h-h" and by this time Virginia would be answering and grandfather would be made

Digitized by Google

fully aware that Virginia was coming. In fact there were none by this time in the large house, or on the grounds that were not amply familiar with the fact,—"the grandchildren are coming"

This before-breakfast romp was the fore-runner of many happy experiences for the young ones during the day. Grandfather's closet, with its boxes and bundles, was the enchanted spot for the children. That was the treasure house that seemed to have no limit, nor bottom, and consequently they cultivated the most intimate acquaintance with grandfather during the hours of the day. But it was not the "goodies" alone that constituted the magnet. The little ones loved grandfather. They thought he was grand: he was so jolly—had such fine questions to ask them, such glorious stories to tell them and such funny things to say to them. He kept them on their mettle for they knew that he was strict with them on certain points and that they had to toe the mark in their good behavior. In one of his letters to Edith he wrote: "I had an imperial time with Virginia last week. She is a fountain of delight to me and her devotion to me is worthy of my best love and attention."

The Christmas season passed, the children and grandchildren melted away, and the Academy students began to pour in from their homes. The boys whom Dr. Hatcher was aiding, in special ways, gave him much joy, but sometimes they put thorns in his pillow. They were not angelic in their make-up and sometimes they would fly the track, much to the grief of their benefactor, Dr. Hatcher, and yet his patience seemed inexhaustible. There was one boy at the Academy that seemed well nigh hopeless but Dr. Hatcher would not give him up.

"I am in tribulation about C———— the Little" he writes to Elizabeth "I could not reach his father and may not see him for some days. If you feel like talking to the little thing—he is only a child in moral development—and trying to lift him up a little I would be glad. But do not do it if it would strain you in the least. I was pleased by your saying that we ought to save him. I am much in doubt about him but I have not yet relaxed my grasp upon him."

Digitized by Google

Yet another case may be mentioned. In his letter of February 23rd he writes to his Chinese boy at Fork Union (not Ah Fong) whom he was befriending. This youth had decided that he wanted to quit the Academy and return to New York. Dr. Hatcher sought to save him from such a surrender by writing him:

"I was hoping that you would remain until you were prepared for College. I was very sorry to read your statement that you felt the studies were too hard at the Academy. You must not be afraid of hard things. If you ever become a man it will be by hard work and you ought not to run away from your studies because they are hard.

"Besides, your report is a good one. It shows that you are getting along well and I have no doubt that you will continue to improve.

"But I will not think ill of you if you go back to New York.

"I had already paid your tuition in the Academy for the rest of the session. I do not see how you can leave Fork Union until I get there.

"Your Friend,

"W. E. Hatcher."

One of the boys whom he was aiding had run away from Fork Union but Dr. Hatcher found him and sent him back to Fork Union bearing the following letter to Edith:

"I send you a note by the returning prodigal. I trust that Careby Hall will welcome him back and seek to build up his crippled fortunes. He is the weak member of the Academic household and we must save him if it is possible. All I ask is that the female side of the institution will bolster him and help him to start afresh.

"I must compliment you on your skill in training the orchestra. I wish that you would give lessons on some stringed instruments. That would be more popular with the boys than the piano. Not so profitable, I suppose."

Such efforts as are indicated by these letters—all written within the space of two or three months—he was ever making to save and train the boys.

Digitized by Google

To William E., Jr.; he writes:

"I was as happy as Katherine's kitten when I got your letter.

"I was at Careby Hall last Sunday. That morning I opened the door and shouted "C-h-i-l-d-r-e-n-!" and here they came,—Virginia and Lewis, Katherine and Harry, all tumbling, rolling, jumping on the bed and we almost made apples and banannas get up and fly—we ate them so fast. Katherine said: 'We ought to have William' and all of them said: 'That is so,' Then we talked about you as hard as ever we could and all of us wanted to see you. Virginia wanted to kiss you. Harry wanted to hug you, Lewis wanted to peel apples for you, Katherine wanted to play paper dolls with you and grandfather wanted to carry you to the table and butter buckwheat cakes for you. Oh, we had a lovely time, but we missed you. Just wait until Summer and wont we have a jolly time.

"I suppose you never cry now—you are too large and big to cry. You must see that your mother does not get sick again. If you will wait on her and keep her from working too hard, you may save her from getting sick. Do all you can to help her—remember this."

He went to Macon, Georgia where he preached every morning at the Mercer University and every night at the First Church.

His Bristol campaign had triumphed and he was able to announce in the Herald of March 10th: "Bristol is saved. That which the Baptists of Virginia undertook to do has been accomplished." This Bristol College is today one of the largest and most prosperous Baptist institutions for the education of young women in the South.

In April he held revival meetings in St. Joseph, Missouri. Dr. J. E. Cook, the pastor, in whose home he was entertained, writes of Dr. Hatcher's visit. After speaking of "the gigantic labors of his mind and heart this last half century" he thus continues:

"The first sight of Dr. Hatcher at the station gave me the impression that he was getting old. But this man is full of surprises and if he had been a general I wager his reputation

Digitized by Google

for flank movements would be second not even to Stonewall Jackson.

"By the way the old Confederates almost cheered him for his resemblance to General Lee. Dr. Hatcher did not like that very well. He did not think it helped either Lee or himself.

"After I had kept up with him sight-seeing and had kept my single-tree even with his in the meeting and had observed his overflowing wit and good humor in conversation and had been nearly worn out with his pranks with the children I felt almost as if he had buncoed me through his old age "make up"—to use an expression which a preacher has no business to understand.

"I asked Dr. Hatcher if he felt that he had yet preached his best sermons. 'No; but I think I have preached my worst one,' he replied. If there ever was a time of the day when Dr. Hatcher was a little below his normal temperature of hope and courage and abundant life it was just before going to bed at night, with the day's work done and never as well done as he wanted it done. Expressive of a little downheartedness he was used sometimes to say: 'Brer Hatcher got no friends!' And so to me the most striking trait in the man was his big heart for so many folk of all ages and conditions and his entire self forgetfulness for the good of his friends and especially for boys trying to get an education. And Brer Hatcher got friends, myriads of them in Heaven and on earth and will have them in the years to come while children's children remember the shepherd and helper of their fathers and mothers."

It was during these later years that some of us in the family—with a few outside—began to call him "Brer Hatcher" and he would often speak of himself by that name. It started from a little incident during his Grace Street pastorate. He had in his church a very ardent admirer,— John E————, a brother of feeble mental endowment. John declared that his pastor was the best of all preachers on the globe and he never tired of singing his praises. One night in some revival meetings at the church, conducted by Dr. H. M. Wharton, he said at the close of the service: "Dr. Wharton, that was a fine sermon you preached, a mighty fine sermon." The next night he said the same thing and one night, when he was highly praising the sermon, Dr. Wharton said to him:

Digitized by Google

"You liked it, did you, John?"

"Oh, yes, Dr. Wharton, that was certainly a fine sermon. You certainly are a fine preacher."

"You think I am a fine preacher, John? You think I can beat Dr. Hatcher, don't you, John?"

"Oh, yes—Ahem—Well, I don't know about that, for Brer Hatcher do' de best he can."

Of course Dr. Wharton jocularly rang the changes on John's declaration and Brer Hatcher had no remarks to make about it until one day at the General Association when a brother begged for his aid in a collection in the Association for his church. Dr. Hatcher who was presiding, finally yielded and arose, and told the story of Dr. Wharton and John and applied it to the case then in hand, by pointing to the importunate preacher then at his heels and saying that he did not see that he could do anything for him in the Association "but" he said "Brer Hatcher will do de best he can". The result was that the delegates followed in rapid order doing the best they could for the benefit of the needy brother. Many were the times about the home when matters were a little heavy, or draggy, with him, and he would say with a sort of mock gloominess: "Brer Hatcher got no friends."

There was a little couplet which he was fond of humming in his room. I do not remember a period in his life that he would not at times murmur the lines:

"Up and down the river, we will go;
"Up and down the river, and never come back any more."

The last words of the second line would be somewhat mournfully drawn out and I can remember how as a boy those words "never come back any more" would always make me feel he was thinking of death; at any rate they made me think of his dying and going far away, never to return. He would hum them, sometimes while walking up and down his room dressing, and sometimes while seated in his arm chair, apparently in a meditative mood,—not necessarily when he seemed worried

Digitized by Google

or gloomy, but often when his manner was cheerful,—and yet those closing words would always have in them a dismal suggestion.

Possibly the reader would be interested in some of the paragraph products of his pen. Every week his editorial column bristled with items about men and things. For example, in the issue of April 11th he paid a tribute to a Baptist leader in Texas, Dr. J. B. Gambrell, who, he says "is a hero and has never found it out." He closes with the following words:

"We waft our greetings to the Texas leader. If we envy him, it is part of our tribute of admiration. Let Texas Baptists pile burdens on his shoulders and he will carry them. Let the disorganizers spit venom on him; he can stand it; let hosts rise against him, yet he will be confident. He asks no crown and fears no cross."

"An unanswered prayer shows that there is something the matter with the prayer."

After writing about the all-night prayers of the Bible he adds:

"Those who have failed to get a reply must recast their attempts. Let them plan a night attack and keep up the fight until the break of day. God is always near at the break of day. Try Jacob's scheme of prayer and you may get Jacob's crown."

"We are no admirer of the common house-fly. He is an annoyance and a nuisance. He is a disturber of the repose of the community. He promotes the use of immoral adjectives. He tempts all of us to assert that he is worse this Summer than ever before—which probably is not so. He wakes the baby, exasperates the cook, lights in the butter, tumbles into the milk, buzzes, flutters and bites. He has no human friend in all the earth—no one to praise him while he lives and no one to weep for him and to compose his epitath when he dies.

"Now give a house-fly his dues. He may be despicable, but there is one thing that may be said to his honor—he does not bother us at night. He is no nocturnal marauder. Put out your light and go to bed and he will let you rest. He

Digitized by Google

keeps good business hours. He will not strike a man in the dark. It is true that he usually stays until after tea and is certain to open his shop very early in the morning but he never takes advantage of us by pouncing upon us in the bed in the dark of the night. He has at least this negative virtue and there is comfort in it."

He seems not to have the same friendly feeling for the church-going dog as for the stay-at-home fly. Out in the country one day a man said to him:

"Brother Hatcher, I was leading in prayer in the church and I heard a noise and my first feeling was that the devil was in church. Upon opening my eyes I found that it was a dog,—one of my dogs. I was greatly relieved."

To this Dr. Hatcher replied in the Herald:

"For our part we still think that whenever a dog goes into church, the devil is apt to come with him. It is well when we go to the house of the Lord to leave the devil and the dogs behind."

Some one asked him his opinion regarding a certain gentleman and his reply in the Argus was: "He seems to live on bad terms with success of all sorts,—an aimable, nonconstructive, warbling brother, whom I rather like and yet I would feel it a sin to encourage you to put him at the head of the Academy."

"Several friends have anxiously inquired of us if we saw a severe reflection made upon us in one of the prominent Baptist papers of the South. Happily we did not see it and will make it a point not to see it. In our more sensitive periods we were stung by personalities, but in these balmy days we hate not the bitter brother. We respectfully ask the brethren to be good to us, if they possibly can, but if this is asking the impossible at their hands, then we ask them to be as moderately bad as their hearts will allow them. We do not think a man is our enemy because he speaks evil of us and yet we must not mistake evil speaking as a christian grace."

In the following paragraph he was the "friend" alluded to. He had learned that Dr. Landrum, his greatly loved friend, had received the Degree of LL. D.:

Digitized by Google

"And so W. W. Landrum has the LL. D. If there be honor, or power, in it Landrum deserves it. . . . It gives him a three-lettered perch above the D. D. populace and that may tickle the non-noble part of him, if he has any. But he cannot eat it, preach it, trade it, nor talk it. The Doctor has a friend who was LL. D.'d some years ago and got a Diploma which his admiring family guiltily framed and hung up for the third generation, and maybe the fourth, to gaze upon and adore. The nail pulled out and over went the frame and smash went the glory."

"There are some preachers that would ordain an idiot rather than mortify a spinster aunt or an ambitious sister."

"Whenever the Lord makes a preacher somebody else makes a deacon to hold down and try the patience of that brother."

His 69th birthday was drawing near and it may have suggested the following:

"Look-out, old folks! Old trees do not make a forest. They are not a vital part unless they keep green and drop their acorns for growing new trees. Old trees, when they die, encumber and disfigure the forest and, being in the way, ought to be removed. But there is nothing finer than a fresh, sound fruitful old tree. Young trees look up to and honor an old tree like that.

"The main business of the old is to keep in touch with the young to love them, to seek to develop and encourage them. Their leaf must not fade."

"We have to divide Baptist preachers into several classes:

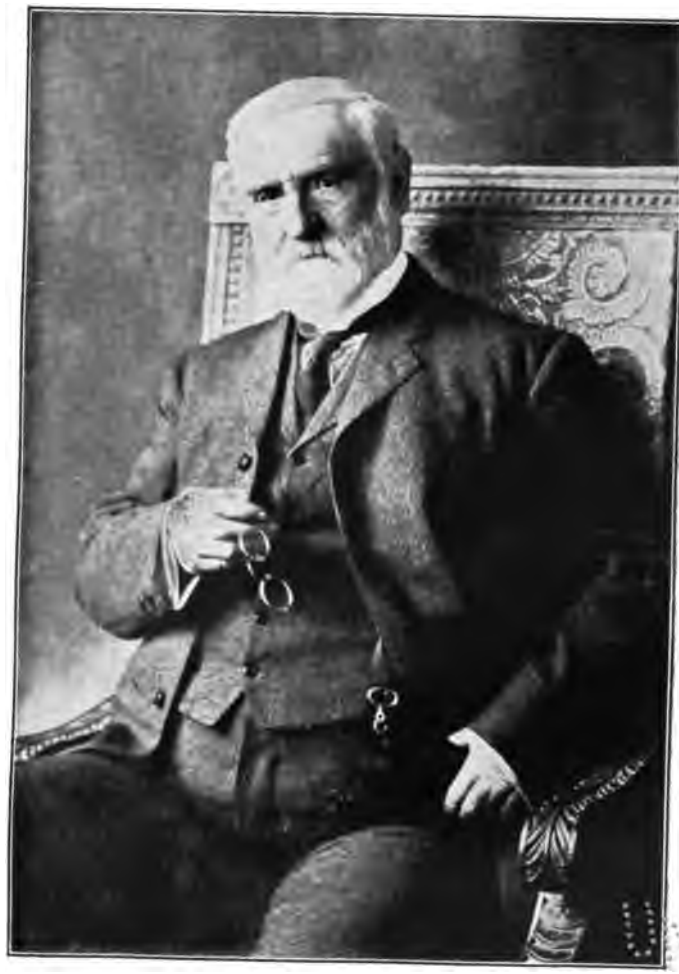
"1. Those who, for some reason, do not speak with distinctness. It is hard to hear them.

"2. Those who, endowed with strong lungs, talk too loudly. They stun and shatter by blasphemous roars. It makes one's tympanum raw to hear them.

"3. Those who bawl. They are vociferous and the chief function of their ministrations is to promote headache.

"4. Those who explode. They go on softly for a while and even tend to a whisper and suddenly they raise a yell. They are fine for waking children and also for causing small dogs to bark.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"5. Those who talk out the gospel in a natural and earnest way. Brother which are you?"

He wrote an item in the paper at this time that came near being an unconscious portrait of himself. Southern Baptists were looking for a man to fill the Home Mission Secretaryship—one of their most important offices and he wrote describing the kind of man who he thought was needed for the position. In doing so he draws a picture of his ideal Denominational leader.

"The brother lives in the South. In age he is just mounting to his prime and grows with ripened vigor. The complexion of his brain is grey and there is a greyish tint in his hair. His mental machinery works with musical throb and is free from tie-ups and jerks. Heavy suppers he avoids on principle. He can travel without fatigue and wonders what insomnia means. He does not catch cold under the breath of a Spring breeze, reveres snowy linen, has no tobacco smell in his clothes and is not weak in his spinal column. To his honor he spells well, has a store of rich cogent English, does not yell like a Comanche Indian when he speaks, is systematical, but not statistical, never outrages the emotions or tastes of his audiences, never speaks over an hour, indulges no rhetorical booms, will never grow a crop of official pomposity, has no hereditary melancholia, falls into no nervous sprees, never whimpers about overwork, does not read his articles to his friends in private, has no neoptic strings to his bow and keeps his family at home while he runs his office.

"He is constructive, full of initiative and great on detail. He abhors stock stories, does not plume himself on being witty, has no conceit that he is born to take the foolish brother down and would quit the earth sooner than tell a coarse anecdote merely to raise a rattling laugh.

"Look out for the brother. He is disposed to invisibility and is applying for nothing. To find him is needed a search and a pair of spiritual eye glasses. We plead that he be hunted down and dragged out into the glare. He is our choice for the secretaryship of the Atlanta Board if we can only land him."

"I cannot describe the glory of our [Academy] Commencement," he wrote me, "It was great in every point and nerve. Ah

Digitized by Google

Fong, my dear, good, Ah Fong, came out as usual with his ribbons streaming."

Among the visiting speakers at the Commencement were Drs. W. H. Whitsitt and J. N. Prestridge. It always gave him delight for Ah Fong to do exceptionally well in his public performances. Ah Fong thus writes concerning one of his speeches:

"I remember one time he went with me to an Association and I had to make a speech. After the meeting some one came up and said to him: 'Well, your Chinese boy beat the whole bunch.' 'Oh; go away, he replied. He is no good,' Then in a low voice he said: 'I dont want you to praise him before his face; I fear he will get a swell head, though I am glad you think well of him.' "

Ah Fong also adds the following:

"I remember one day he said to me: 'Ah Fong you are right smart but you are everlastingly ugly.'

"When I pitched quoits with him and pitched a close one to the post, or rung it, he would say: 'Brother Hatcher does'nt like it'. "When he had a leaner [his quoit leaning against the post] and I would say: 'I'll knock it off,' he would reply: 'I hear you make a remark, but dont know where you get your scripture from.'

"I remember on several occasions he asked me whether or not I was happy and whether or not I had been treated well. Then he would say: 'I am too poor, Ah Fong. Why do you want to live with such a poor creature as I am? Tho' I am poor, I have tried to make you comfortable, dont you think I have?'

"I answered: 'Yes, sir; more than that, you have been more than a father to me.' Then his face would light up with happiness and he told me the following story:

" 'Do you know how it came about that I took you into my family? A great many people thought that I have been to China and know your father and that I sent for you to come. They are mistaken. Mr. Chambers brought you here without my knowledge. At first he talked to Dr. Ryland about you saying that your father is a faithful christian and a preacher in China and that your father wants you to be educated in this country. Dr. Ryland told Mr. Chambers to look me up

Digitized by Google

and tell me the story, saying that I was a great lover of boys. So Chambers came around to me with his story. I asked Chambers whether or not your father can support you in any way. Chambers answered: 'No; he has no more money left now.' 'So when you came to me you were without a penny. I asked Chambers whether or not you were willing to work—that is to help about the house. Chambers said: 'Yes,' 'I told Chambers that I will try you about a month or two, if we could get along I'll keep you; if not I'll turn you back to him again, so you see I took you in with a condition, because I never had any dealing with Chinamen before. But Ah Fong I declare you have been a real joy to me. I believe God sent you to cheer old Brother Hatcher.'

"Dr. Hatcher loved all kinds of games from pitching horse shoes up. I remember on one 4th of July there was a picnic and a base ball game at Arvonia between Fork Union and Arvonia. Dr. Hatcher was at Fork Union. So we decided to go to Arvonia to take in the fun. We went in a two horse carriage. We got to Arvonia safely. During the day the horses somehow got unmanageable and broke the tongue of the carriage and Fork Union got whipped. There was no fun at all on our return trip.

"I often went to Bremo to meet Dr. Hatcher when he came to Fork Union. I remember one very cold night we were driving back from Bremo. The wind was whizzing hard and I was very cold, my teeth were chattering. He said: 'Is'nt this great?' Sometimes he would ask: 'Is'nt this a glorious night?' I answered: 'No; it's too cold.' 'Oh, go away, what are you talking about?' he would reply."

At this time there came from the distant plains of Texas a kindly word from Dr. J. B. Cranfill, editor of the Texas Standard, who wrote in his paper: "We have one evidence of conversion—we love the brethren and up, far up toward the head of the list is the name of Dr. W. E. Hatcher."

His life during this Summer was brightened by the presence at Careby of the Grandchildren. He would dash from point to point in the state in his educational work, but every week, or two, he would swing off from the line of travel to spend a day or so at Careby.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVI

1903—1905

WELCOMING GRANDFATHER. COUNTRY PEOPLE. THE LOUISVILLE SEMINARY. TRIBUTES TO DRS. MCDONALD AND MEADOR. COLLECTION FOR THE SEMINARY. CONVENTION AT KANSAS CITY.

The arrival of "grandfather" at Careby was always a big event on the hill. It looked as if he generally came on the night train and did not reach Careby—five miles distant from the depot until nearly nine o'clock. The little ones had to be kept up for his coming and the understanding was that all would be listening out for the bang of the outer gate, or the rumble of the carriage wheels on the bridge. That was the signal for a rush to the front porch by everybody, old as well as young, and such an uproarious welcome was given to the traveler! "Hello, grandfather!" "Hello grandfather!" "Hurrah for grandfather!" "Thought you were never coming. Glad to see you grandfather". Everybody on the porch was calling out a welcome even before they could catch sight of him in the dark and, in the meantime, the children were scampering down the lawn and screaming as they went; if it was in the day they would pile up in the conveyance, if they could spy him in time. The next thing is the unloading, the buggy wheels are turned so that grandfather—and he is getting mighty big—can get out and then the bundles—Oh, how kind the sweet-toothed grandchildren are in helping to take out the bundles, one of them is lifting the basket out of the front and the other two are pulling at the packages in the back of the carriage. By this time the other members of the family have gotten out to

Digitized by Google

the carriage and the greeting is given and then, with nearly every body carrying a bundle and the children jumping in their glee, the procession moves up the walk and into the house.

Of course the regular supper has been long over but grandfather will have a special supper and usually it is served to him in his study, with the children fluttering about him, and bombarding him with all manner of questions about his trip and also keeping a friendly eye on the packages. It is not surprising, therefore, that the grandchildren gave a shout when a letter came to one of them on August 19th saying:

"Grandfather hopes to come. . . Friday night. You must sleep in the day and be up to see me when I come. Have the carriage sent to Bremo for me and have a good supper ready. I expect to have a great time with my grandchildren when I come. Won't we eat oranges and cackees until the sun goes down?

"Nanpapa."

If his Careby visit brought sun-light to its inmates it was also true that when he moved out for his Summer jaunts through the state he also brought joy to the places he visited. For example, one of the Associations which he visited was the Albemarle and Rev. W. W. Reynolds writes:

"Dr. Hatcher was recognized and given the right of way. Dr. Hatcher, what a man he is and how we all love him! How he thrilled the audience."

To his delight the Academy opened with "110 and more coming". The new boys, who had not selected their homes, would, upon their arrival report at Careby Hall which was called "Castle Garden".

"I thought your father would like it that way" writes my mother "and the parents love to hear that their children are at the president's house and so we have had a number."

While he delighted in the inrush of so many students at the

Digitized by Google

opening of the Academy his heart also lingered about those boys who had not been able to come. He put into the Argus a plea for their coming:

"Exactly so,—'We had hoped to send Walter to school this year but we had to give it up'. Yes, you did give it up and why? Because his mother was too chicken-hearted to let him go from home and because you, in the secrets of your heart, could not spare your money to educate Walter. Go ahead and deprive your boy of his chance and doom him to speak bad grammar and misspell his words and be a mudsill to the end of his days. Is'nt it curious that the Lord entrusts children to such narrow and unappreciative parents? But you might send him yet. He would be a little slow getting there but better late than not at all."

He attended the General Association in November and my mother writes: "Your father's paper and address unified the different elements."

In the next month he paid a visit to Halifax County about which he writes to me in the following bright vein:

"It looked to me as if they had gotten the neighborhood together for the special purpose of storing away comforts and sweet surprises for me.

"Ah it must be a fancy of mine but the best goodness of earth seems to me to dwell in the country. Of course it does not wear furs and tipped gloves, nor dress in front of French mirrors. Its manners are clumsy and its kindness does not always attend us in polished kids. But the rough old fellows look fine to me as they tie their horses in the woods and rub their stinging ears as the wind cuts them. I had all this, with good women coming up telling me pleasant things, with boys piled up on the pulpit, with my collection running over bounds and getting more than we asked for, with a dinner which they had been preparing for a long time, with old friends—that I did not know were living—trooping around me, with fathers and mothers talking to me about educating their boys and girls and with a lot of preachers so tender and affectionate. But, hold this is not business—it is almost as useless as poetry and an old crone like me has no sort of right to be enjoying himself."

Digitized by Google

Dr. Wm. R. Harper, President of Chicago University, wrote him as follows:

"Rev. William E. Hatcher,
"Richmond, Va.:

"My Dear Sir,—I wish to express my very great appreciation of the article published by you in the Baptist Argus of December 10th. From the literary point of view, from the homiletic point of view and from the point of view of Christian charity I think it is superb.

"Yours Very Truly
"William R. Harper."

A telegram called him to Wytheville where his half brother Allan was at the point of death. "He told the servant" said Dr. Hatcher "that if he could hold out until he saw me he would be ready to go."

"My Dear old brother Allan was buried yesterday" he writes me. "I hope to spend tonight with your Aunt Margaret, now the only survivor of the first children, herself over 80 years of age. . . Possibly I may cheer her by my brief visit."

In March he held revival meetings in Staunton where he writes: "I of course am in a tremor as to results and always feel that surely the Lord will not bless. This is my mood at present but mercy works many surprises."

The news reached him that Dr. Henry McDonald,—one of the noblest and dearest of all his friends—had suffered a stroke of paralysis:

"Ah, my friends are going" he writes me—"except the large part already gone. I feel a sense of my nearing end and it is not, except sentimentally, unpleasant, and not so unpleasant in that regard."

To his grandson, William, who had been very sick, he writes that if he would come to Richmond he would carry him up to Fork Union:

Digitized by Google

"The carriage" says he "would come dashing out to Bremo and take us flying to Careby Hall. Then we will have a happy time. I will go out in the hall and call out as loud as I can: 'Wil-l-u-m-m-m' and then I will shout: 'Virgini-a-a-a-a and you and Virginia will say: "All right we are coming." Then here will come running Lewis and Harry and we will make the banannas and apples flutter. Hurry up my little lovely and come to see me.

"Loving Nanpapa."

The stunning report came to him of Dr. McDonald's death:

"The day grew dark" he wrote "when he quit the earth. The message that he was gone shut up our lips; we fled from the city and spent the night in seclusion, transfixed with the thought that he was walking in light before the face of his King. For this time we simply wave him an envious farewell.

"We loved his faults better than we have loved the virtues of common men. We often contended with him, and there was light and comfort in the friction. He lived so high that we did not have to change our range of vision as he ascended to the Father; we only looked up higher. To friends we dare to say that in a calmer mood we will give several papers of reminiscences connected with our departed friend."

He was a loyal friend, not only to individuals, but also to institutions. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary seemed to regard him as one of its most helpful champions.

"I remember" says Dr. P. T. Hale, "the last time that he came to the Seminary to deliver one of his always powerful and uplifting addresses to the students. When he appeared, a storm of applause, which became a tumultuous ovation of affection and regard, greeted him,—for some minutes after he arose to speak; they refused to allow him to proceed, until they bore this overwhelming testimony of their esteem and happiness at his presence. The venerable white head was bowed again and again in appreciation of their loving and enthusiastic greetings. They honored him as a leader, whose services had been so unselfishly and freely given to the Institution which was always so near his great heart."

At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at Nashville in May, he took up a collection for the Seminary.

Digitized by Google

"I never saw a finer popular collection" says a writer in the Baptist Courier. "It went on for an hour and the great crowd staid through it all. Dr. Hatcher. . . never surpassed his work in the Seminary Collection. The total finally reached $50,000." He himself said "Some collections are lifted; this one was handed down." With the vast audience of delegates before him and with several ministers in the aisles aiding him, he stood like a Captain on a ship directing the crew. With the subscriptions being called out by the ushers, he would give forth such a rapid-fire of bright comment about the gifts and the givers that he kept the people in a jubilant, and yet reverent, frame. One of the many links binding his heart to the Seminary was its president, Dr. E. Y. Mullins, for whom he had high admiration and under whose splendid leadership the Seminary has developed into such large and noteworthy proportions.

Still another friend of his soul passed into the great beyond,—Dr. C. C. Meador. In the Herald concerning Dr. Meador he began by saying: "It was with a startling catch in my breath that I saw the announcement that Dr. Chastain C. Meador of Washington City had suddenly departed from the earth."

After writing of Dr. Meador's youth and his ministry he closes with the following:

"This is no biographical sketch. My heart would go wild at this hour, when my long friend is so newly gone up to glory, if it has to meddle with the mere dates and figures of his golden career. These plain words are mere snap shots of a friend,—taken as he arises from earth to enter the eternal city.

"There ought not to a funeral of C. C. Meador. The thing becoming us best is to rejoice over a victorious life and a death splendid with suddenness and serenity."

The closing sentence in this tribute to Dr. Meador contains a very characteristic phrase. It is the phrase "a death splendid with suddenness and serenity"—a picture of the death which he himself longed for. "I am wofully afraid I will not die gracefully" he said to a friend. The reigning ambition of his

Digitized by Google

life was that all his actions should be performed according to the highest standard, and this aspiration pertained not merely to his writings, his preachings and his other actions but even to the manner of his dying. He even had high wishes regarding his funeral. At the beginning of his Grace Street pastorate in Richmond 30 years before this he lived in a house with a narrow and tortuous stairway, "I never see that house" said a lady many years afterwards living on the opposite side of the street "that I do not think of Dr. Hatcher saying that he hoped that he would not die in that house for he did not see how they would ever get his body down those steps."

But if he was solicitous regarding the final departure of his body, immeasurably more anxious was he regarding the manner in which his spirit would take its final flight. His desire was for "a death splendid with suddenness and serenity." We have already spoken of this but it may well be emphasized. He shrank from the thought of a halt and drag at the end. He wished that death should catch him with his sickle in his hand and that he could spring from the harvest field into the presence of his Master. "We'll work till Jesus comes" was his favorite hymn, and in multitudes of places in the South the sound of that hymn will at once call to mind Dr. Hatcher.

He declared relentless war against decrepitude or indolence. He came to Baltimore during the winter of 1905 to aid Dr. C. L. Laws in meetings at the First Church, and from Baltimore he went to Hollins Institute to aid Dr. Geo. B. Taylor in meetings.

"I have reason to be of all men the most grateful and contented" he writes. "The Lord multiplies to me the most choice and unexpected joys." "Tell William" he wrote to my wife "that I would give a gold dollar just to have him sit on my knee and let me peel an apple for him.".

Later on he wrote to William:

"I have been to Careby Hall and it looks beautiful and what made it look still prettier was that Virginia and Katherine were

Digitized by Google

at Careby and every morning they dashed down stairs and we ate apples to beat the drummers. I carried up a basket of apples and we had a gay time as sure as you are a fine boy. I must tell you that we were not quite happy, because all the time we were wishing that William was there. Virginia would say: 'Would'nt it be jolly if William were only here?' and after awhile Katherine would say: 'Grandfather dont you wish that William was here?' and that would almost make grandpapa cry just to think that his fine boy could not be there. Lewis would come in and I would give him a piece of apple and he would say that we ought to have William to help eat those apples. Then in would jump Harry and when I handed him some apple he would laugh and tell how William used to eat apples at Christmas. Ah Fong would blink his eyes and look as if he were fairly sick to see you. Never mind you must come next Summer."

Another affliction befell him at this time,—the death of his brother Harvey. "I have had the subduing sorrow of my life" he wrote in reference to it.

His brother died in the way in which he hoped his own end would come—suddenly. In writing in the paper about his brother's death his pen seemed to move with an extra bouyancy when it came to tell of the manner of his going. He spoke of Harvey taking his last look at earth and then springing with a bound into the eternal world, and he wrote as if he was immensely proud that his brother had departed in such fashion.

The Academy gave him many joys, but it also furnished him its quota of bothers.

"We have four snows" he writes, "piled on each other with a slight rumpus in the Academy on top of it. But things wag on very well."

"I trust that you will work up the Saturday night frolic for the boys" he writes a little later to Elizabeth. "Beg or buy the material for the candy. Have a committee on Amusements, also on any other necessary thing."

Elizabeth was his "man Friday" in his handling of the boys. Much of his work for them was done through her. She

Digitized by Google

seemed to enter into fullest sympathy with him in all his ideals and plans about the development of the boys, and her helpfulness to the Academy then and in subsequent years was incalculable. He had distinguished men visit and address the students at frequent intervals. He writes Elizabeth, "I expect you and the Academy and Careby to give President Boatwright a regal time."

In February he paid a visit that marked the beginning of a delightful friendship with Dr. C. H. Dodd, pastor of the Peddie Memorial Church in Newark N. J. He went to preach the morning sermon on Founders Day and also had a happy visit at his daughter Orie's in Bryn Mawr College. "I found her rooms beautiful" he wrote; "I felt as if I was in Windsor or Buckingham Castle. I lunched with her and met quite a choice company of her friends and though I was decked in the proverbial dust of travel I was most warmly treated."

He held two series of meetings, one in February at Culpeper and the other in March in Mobile, Ala.

The latter part of April found him again in Alabama,—this time to dedicate the splendid new First Baptist Church building in Birmingham.

In May he had a memorable trip. He attended first the Southern Baptist Convention at Kansas City. The Argus in describing his nomination of Mr. E. W. Stephens for the presidency said "Dr. W. E. Hatcher, that prince in Israel, Nestor of Southern Baptists came to the platform to put in nomination for President a man who was already elected in the hearts of the Southern Baptist host. . . and then as only Hatcher can he set forth the qualities of his nominee for this great office."

His Convention visit was varied by an amusing little episode:

"A brother took us aside during our convention trip and after clearing his throat, loosening up the knees of his pants, beating around the bush and after several stammers, said that he felt that we were mad with him about something. The thing fairly took our breath away. We mad with anybody? Not

Digitized by Google

with a mortal on the top of the ground. It so chanced that we had in our pocket at the moment an admiring and appreciative 'Shred' which we had written up a few moments before for the Argus. We took it out and read it to the brother and two souls warmly embraced each other. If you suspect that some brother is angry with you tell him how you feel and you two will be singing blest be the tie that binds in the next ten minutes."

From Kansas City he went to St. Louis to attend the meeting of the General Convention of American Baptists, composed of representative Baptist ministers and laymen from all parts of the United States. His address before the Convention was regarded as one of the brightest and happiest of his life. It was the first time since 1845 that the Baptists of the North and South had met in such a general convention. It had been arranged that Dr. Edward Judson, son of Adoniram Judson as representing the North and Dr. Hatcher as representing the South should deliver the opening addresses which should in some sense set the pace for the Convention proceedings.

He wrote me the following letter just before he started to the Convention auditorium to deliver his address,—Dr. C——— acting as his amanuensis:

"My Dear E,—That I have treated you in a most unfatherly way is a fact beyond all denial and I am afraid that my bad treatment would be continued but for the fact that Dr. C——— is in my room at this time and I have decided to keep him quiet by asking him to write to you for me.

"I recommend you to the newspapers for news as to the Kansas Convention. . . . I fussed around in the Convention considerably after the old sort, but do not think that my absence would have been a sensible subtraction from the interest of the body. One man is a little thing in that body, particularly when Brother Hatcher is the man.

"I am now in St. Louis—stopped here a day for the American Baptist Convention. This morning I am in a terror because of a little part I am to take. I haven't many thoughts and what few I have are squirming and twisting with each other like worms in a cup. The agony will be over by noon and I will mount the first train that will take me back to old Virginia shore.

Digitized by Google

"I have fully determined to close my connection with the College the first of July. I have never had one day of personal freedom from a formal engagement since I left College. I do want a taste of personal liberty before my days on earth shall end. I had rather preach a year than to ask for money one morning before breakfast. Folks have not yet found out that I can't preach and as long as they labor under that pleasant delusion I want to preach. This is all I can say now."

His address charmed the Northern brethren as much as it did those of the South. Dr. Judson afterwards remarked to two Virginia ministers that Dr. Hatcher was "the greatest platform speaker in America." *The Dispatch* referred to the address as the "The Notable Speech of Dr. Hatcher's" and the *Argus* said that it doubted whether Dr. Hatcher was ever in his life as happy in an address as he was in that and then added: "We never saw an audience more en-rapport with a speaker. It was utterly impossible to report the speech."

As he came to the front he said "I am very glad, indeed, that the president could think of something to say about me," and then he continued:

"I feel profoundly the significance, the sublimity of this hour. This is a scene upon which many have desired to look and have died without sight. I can not but look up this morning and think that those men of God, who sixty years ago parted, are standing together at the windows of the heavenly city, looking upon this sight."

He next declared that such a gathering gave notice to the world that the northern and the southern Baptists, while separated, were not divided.

Later, in his address, he said: "Our nation has waked up in the last five or six years to find that our task is largely away from home and that she must take care of other nations and keep them straight. I know this remark is awful and you may not like it at all,—but I am a Democrat. I have thought lately that possibly I might get over it, or get somebody else over to my side. . . . I would like for the Baptists of this

Digitized by Google

country to catch that world spirit. We must come together.

He next touched upon the Civil War estrangements that had formerly separated the northern and southern Baptists and the bitter feelings that had divided them in the matter of the southern slaves,—or "servants" and the delightful change that seemed now to mark the relations between the two peoples:

"Now, let me say again I think we ought to get together and try and keep in line. It is very hard for two people to carry on business just across the road, where they can see each other all the time and especially when they are carrying on the same kind of business and have trouble with their children. Abraham and Lot had a fuss. I do not undertake to say which was wrong, though there was a bad lot of misunderstandings. But I tell you what struck me in connection with that squabble was that Abraham laid down the platform for comity with a view to staying apart! It is a great deal harder to stay apart than to stay together, and if we are to be separated we ought to have some tribunal, if that word does not scare some strict constructionist, where these questions may be settled. You know the trouble that took place between Abraham and Lot was started with their servants. (Laughter.) I think we will have to meet now and then, Mr. President, and look after our servants and let them not quarrel about the grazing places and the watering places and things of that kind. I do not know much about comity myself, but any glimpses I have had of it have given me a high opinion of it, and I think that this movement is going to take care of it. And now, Mr. President, for this reason I have felt that we should, with cordiality, adopt these resolutions, and we will act together in the organization indicated in this paper.

"My brethren, I want to say that when, twenty-five years ago, in the city of Atlanta, my venerable old father in the ministry, Dr. Jeter, proposed that the Baptists of America should be brought together in one organization, I, afraid to speak, but full of fire, felt just that way; but when John A. Broadus, that matchless leader, issued his moral edict it went the other way, and I have been a Southern Baptist Convention man ever since. Besides, at that time I do not think it would have done for the Baptists of the South to have come to a meeting of this kind. They were not dressed well enough,

Digitized by Google

they were almost as poor as Lazarus and had about as many sores. (Laughter.) They were not in good traveling order. We are getting on very well down South and we can come into a fraternity like this without any suggestion of mendicancy. God is bringing back the power and glory and riches of the South. (Applause.) We are coming to the point where we do not feel that you can mistake us. With earnest spirit of fraternity and cordiality I second the motion for this union."

At the close the great congregation were on their feet in a moment and burst forth into singing "All hail the power of Jesus name."

He laid great stress upon being in proper mental condition when appearing before an audience and would always make his preparation promptly so that he would be free and unstrained in the hours immediately preceding the address. He felt it important to keep himself in bright and jovial frame, in order that there might be a spontaneous movement of his mental forces while speaking. Consequently there was no hurried and fidgety tugging at his address up to the moment of going to the platform.

He was being constantly urged to write one or two books, but he treated as almost preposterous the suggestion that the public would welcome a volume from his pen; but we kept up our appeals feeling sure—judging from the reception accorded his newspaper writings—that a book from him would be eagerly read. "I do hope that X———— will insist on his writing something that will live, of the reminiscent order" writes his wife. "Orie was talking the other day of what a rare talent he had of writing at first hand—the result of early training, very largely".

He surrendered later on to our bombardment, and set his hand to the task of book making.

"Fork Union, Va., July, 19, 1905.

"My Dear Eldridge and Anna,—I have no fat matter with which to enrich a letter. Personal items with myself as the Magna Pars are sorely against the grain with me,—all

Digitized by Google

the more as my life is so common-place. . . I am tame and stupid tonight and will try a few words to my charming grandson.

"As Ever, W. E. H."

"Willu-u-ume, my Prince; Grandfather sends you thousands of kisses and tons of smiles. If I had you here I would jump you into the cars and go whirling up and down the road—happy because I had my lovely boy. . . I ache in my toes to see you. Do you want to know the reason I am proud of you. I tell you why—you are so good to your mother and try to help her.

"Your Big Lover, Grandfather."

He received the tidings that William had a little sister,—thus adding another to the list of his grandchildren, which fact drew forth the following letter:

"GRIFFINSBURG, VA.

"MY DEAR AND LOVELY WILLIAM,—I am just the happiest grandfather anywhere between the mountain and the sea. I have been very sick this week but when I heard yesterday that you had a sister, who is named Anna Granville and is as sweet as a white rose, I felt almost light enough to jump over the new moon. I am glad that our Heavenly father has given you a little sister. I know that you will love her and be good to her. You must pray for her every night and help your mother to take care of her during the day.

"I am going to Careby tomorrow and I will tell Tom to have Brux and Britton as fat as butter and the new carriage shining like gold to go out to Bremo and bring my two grandchildren. Won't grandmother be glad when you get there and won't E and Aba shout when they hear about it?

"Grandfather."

He drew a picture in the Argus of an old gentlemen standing thirsty at a bucket of water, and the picture with him in it is so true to life that I venture the assertion that he was the old gentleman in question.

"We were at a picnic the other day" he writes "and several people gathered around a bucket of cool water and each was struggling to grasp the dipper. The only exception was that

Digitized by Google

of an old gentleman who, with unruffled serenity, seemed ready to wait for any drop or two that might be left after the scramble. A thoughtful boy offered him the dipper, but another boy flared up and said that he came first. The gentleman with the snowy locks smiled pleasantly and said:

" 'Boy, by all means let the boy drink first; the old ought always to revere the young.'

"The thirsty lad cast a queer, inquiring look at the old man who had bowed to him with gracious kindness. Some long silent chord in the boy's nature must have been struck for his face flushed and his head fell and he quit the spot with his thirst unquenched."

He held a meeting the first part of August in Culpeper where he wrote:

"I am having agonies with something like lumbago. The Doctor says it is Sciatica and I only know that it is like a knife in my bones. But I am otherwise well and thank the Lord that I am living."

The one lustrous fact over which he never failed to rejoice was that he was "living". In his prayers, his letters and his conversations he was ever expressing his gratitude that he was alive. He yearned to live. He said in an address, in his earlier ministry, that one of the best signs that a man was ready to die was his eagerness to live,—that is, provided he wished to live in order to do his work. Many were the times that he would say "I thank the Lord that I am still living." If things went awry with him in his old age he would say "Yes, but I am still living."

"Buy William a $2 present" he wrote me on August 5th three days before his birthday, "and give it to him on that day. Surprise him. I mailed him a long letter which he will get Monday."

Evidently he had his own notions about violent athletic drills in young women's schools. He writes:

Digitized by Google

"We have come in sight,—thank heaven, not striking distance, however—of several young women of late who tore us up badly enough. Their way of swinging their hands was startling, so vindictive indeed that we thought that they had really been taking lessons in tragic elocution. We trembled for their arms lest they might get uncoupled at the shoulder and we wondered whether they were not mad about something,—so fierce they were in their swings. With the utmost diffidence we plead with the fair and athletic maidens not to wear such fighting airs in public and not to die in needless agonies by wrenching their elbows out of place. Fair maidens guard against manual violence."

He had purchased a farm of 430 acres near Fork Union on which was a gold mine of uncertain value. "The gold-mine men" he writes his wife "are crowding me to let them open up the mine. . . I do not wish to get jumbled up with speculators. I would like to get money for the Academy."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVII

1905—1907

INTRODUCING NEW PASTORS. ACADEMY DETAILS. RELATION TO THE ACADEMY. DISAPPOINTMENTS. OLD AGE. STRENUOUS ACTIVITY. WEIGHTED WITH MANY BURDENS. BATTLING WITH SICKNESS.

At the meeting of the General Association in November at Charlottesville he was asked to "introduce" to the Association the new pastors who had come into the state during the past year. He performed in kindly, witty fashion this service each year at the Association and it was regarded as one of the striking features of the session. The picture is still before me of Dr. Alderman, president of the University of Virginia,—on that morning a visitor in the Association at Charlottesville—sitting in a chair at the front and "with laughter holding both his sides" as the "introducing" performance continued. Rev. J. H. Powers says that the first thing he would look for, after getting to the Association each year, was the programme in order that he might see when Dr. Hatcher would introduce the new pastors. "At one of these sessions" says he "I laughed so much that I almost feared that I had injured something on my inside."

One year as he was welcoming the new pastors one of the new men who stepped foreward was a tall, stalwart young minister from the North. Dr. Hatcher made this stranger feel "at home" by playfully introducing him as "a yankee" and, while apparently he was warning the audience against the new-comer from the North, he was, by his kindly manner, winning a very warm place for him in the hearts of the Association. From that

Digitized by Google

moment everybody had a glad hand for the dangerous "yankee", who was none other than Rev. Harry W. Mabie, the successful pastor of the Bluefield Baptist Church. From Fork Union he writes me concerning some Academy problems and adds, "I merely give you these as specimens of my anxieties. I am sure however that they will not kill me." From his grandson, William, he received a letter which consisted simply of innumerable, illegible scratches across the page and which he called his "letter to Nan-papa". It brought from his grandfather the following reply:

"DECEMBER 11, 1905.

"MY FINE BIG BOY,—I received your letter. It was thoroughly incomprehensible and I read every word in it and it was as plain and easy to read as any illegible letter that I ever read. I think your writing is beautiful considering that your chirography is not better. I showed your letter to some of my friends and they said it was a letter that anybody could read provided they were able to do it. What you say about coming to Careby Hall makes me pat my foot like the music of a fiddler. Grandmother says that your sister is growing in beauty and flesh every day. You must give her my love and tell her she may grow as fast as she pleases and get to be the queen of all American Beauties but that after all she will have to admit that she can't write such a letter as you wrote me. I am going up to Careby tomorrow night and I will tell A. and E. to put things in shining shape because the only nephew they have on the earth will be up there in a few days and that I want things fixed just to suit him. When you get to Richmond I will hire a cab to take your mother and your grandmother and your sister over to the other Depot, but you and your father will take a little stroll through the town and view the beauty thereof.

"We are not going to have things very fine at Careby this time because it takes too much money but we want to have things square and nice. I certainly want plenty of apples, plenty of bananas and I propose that we will have great times of a morning before I get up. I am sure Virginia will be there. I expect she will come about Saturday. Maybe Katherine will come too but they will get there later on anyhow and we will shake Careby Hall until the timbers creak.

"Very lovingly Your

"Grandfather"

Digitized by Google

As an example of the little details, as well as the large denominational undertakings that tugged at his brain, may be mentioned the following letter which he received from one of the smaller Academy boys. This lad afterwards was graduated from one of the prominent universities of the land.

"FORK UNION, VA.

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—I hate to keep on bothering you, but my washing bill is due at the end of this week for two months. You were not in Fork Union last month when it was due, so I let it run until this month. I will have to get another Algebra book soon. Must I go to Mr. Bashaw for the money or not? I certainly do appreciate all the things you are doing for me and am trying to make the best of them.

"I remain your loving little friend."

The same boy writes again a few weeks later:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—I am so sorry I did not come over to get that little bundle you had for me, but I had to get up the wood for my room and this took me until study hour yesterday.

"I forgot to mention a matter which I ought to have spoken about when you were here. Capt. Winston is going to make all the cadets get khaki uniforms, or uniforms for Summer wear. These will cost $5.35 per suit. I wrote to aunt ———— and asked her about it; she said you promised to pay for my uniform so I ask you about it. Capt. Winston is taking orders for them now and most of the boys have already paid him.

"Your loving little friend."

During these winter months he was busy in a financial campaign for the College,—a campaign that tried his soul. He was struggling to raise money to cover the losses in the case of those bonds in the Rockefeller campaign that had proved worthless. "I have exhausted the marrow in my bones to get the Rockefeller deficit" he writes. "My night at Winfree's was as sweet as a bird's sonnet."

He writes:

"I never had such a passion as has burned within me for the last two or three weeks for absolute rest. My gift for resting

Digitized by Google

has never been cultivated and I am sure that after two or three days of idleness I will be chafing again for the battle. My plans repose in the bosom of chaos—a very cosy place for them to sleep until called into action."

He also writes:

"It tires me so much more to rest than to work." He writes me of a young preacher who was feeling good over a "raise" in his salary and then he adds: "I think I had a little to do with the action of the church and I only wish that I may be able to help him in other ways." He wrote a characteristic letter to his beloved friend, Judge W. W. Moffett. The Judge had recently been re-elected to the Judgeship by an overwhelming vote, to which Dr. Hatcher in playful fashion thus refers:

"I was quite nervous about your election—being naturally uncertain as to the final result in cases where politics play the game. Had I known you would play the cormorant and swallow everything in sight I might have been saved several wakeful moments. I did not congratulate you because I hate to shout with a mob. When I speak I like to hear my own voice. You know how I felt about it."

There were some who thought that the Academy was a source of considerable income to him. They knew not that while not a dollar had come to him as compensation for his labors for the school, yet on the other hand he had put into it probably several thousands of dollars, in addition to a large portion of his work. The following letter shows his attitude towards the Academy:

"Fork Union, Feb. 17, 1906.

"My Dear Eldridge,—I had a great visit to Fork Union. The [Academy] Trustees had a tremendous meeting, barring one or two luckless hitches. X———— struck for higher wages with rather a disastrous result. But that will blow off in no good while. We passed some mammoth resolutions about new buildings. They also undertook to employ me at a thousand dollars to be their agent, I suppose you might call it. This I solemnly and defiantly refused. I told them it would

Digitized by Google

kill me to receive a salary from the Academy—that I could not hire myself out to one of my children. Finally, they passed a resolution setting apart a thousand dollars, subject to my order and to be disposed of in any way that I thought proper. In response to that I said nothing. Their demonstration was so gracious and enthusiastic that it found a rather tender spot beneath my waistcoat. One never knows what may come, but I feel that if I were to receive a salary from the Academy it would put me at a disadvantage. I have to fight very often encroachments upon the treasury and I shrink from the suspicion of being an encroacher.

"Besides, it grates upon the loving joy which I have always found in what I do for the Academy. I humbly pray the Lord that the day may never come when I shall be either an employee or a beneficiary of the Academy."

The meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was drawing near and he received the following letter from Ex-governor Stephens of Missouri who was at that time the President both of the Southern Baptist Convention and of the Baptist General Convention:

"Now as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and also of the Baptist General Convention I command your presence at both bodies. I simply cannot do business without you. I mean this.

"You must be at both places from start to finish. The Southern Baptists cannot play Hamlet without him. We are expecting a great meeting at Chattanooga and you will be an essential part of it.

"I assure you it will be a genuine pleasure to be with you again. I read everything you write and listen to everything you say, publicly and privately, when I am near you and I do not know that I can say this of any other man, living or dead, for I am the easiest man bored you ever saw. Of course my family would all take pleasure in visiting you in Virginia, but it will have to be on condition that you visit us first.

"I again want to insist upon your being at Chattanooga, if not at Louisville, and if possible at both."

He suffered a mishap in the spring that cut him deeply, and yet his irrepressible optimism came to his rescue. He was

Digitized by Google

en-route to the Colgate Seminary to deliver a series of lectures before that institution. His manuscript was snugly packed away in his valise as he stopped over in Philadelphia to spend the Sabbath day and preach morning and night at the Memorial church. But—as he once remarked—"The Lord often takes our programmes out of our hands, tears them up and constrains us to go in ways we know not of."

He tells in the following paragraph of the collapse of his plans:

"Unaccountably we succumbed within an hour of our arrival to that weird, contradictory thing which travels the earth and does mischief under the name of the Grippe."

But he pulled himself together and forced himself out to the Memorial church on the next day and attempted to preach, but he said:

"We forgot the Lord's prayer, leaving out one part and saying another part of it twice, and read the New Testament when we ought to have read the Old Testament, and forced the choir to sing an anthem when they ought to have chanted. . . . Our voice cracked, wheezed and broke into grating dissonances."

Monday came and with it came the Doctor who cut short his trip to Colgate. Concerning this visit of the physician he wrote:

"He came and saw and ordered us back to Virginia by the next train. We set our face back to old Virginia and that came nearer making us feel like a human being than anything else that had occured. A delirious and agonizing trip of seven hours put us in Richmond at midnight and the next day found us at our hut in the brush in the fine foot-hills of the Blue Ridge. Four days have patched us up in spots and at this present writing we are cherishing the somewhat reckless hope of seeing Chattanooga next week."

What a fall was that!—the Philadelphia visit turned into a comic tragedy, and the Colgate lectures left suspended in the

Digitized by Google

air, and he who was to be the happy hero, suddenly bundled up as an invalid and shipped back to the little village of Fork Union. This dismal experience was soon succeeded by another disappointment. He was on the point of starting for the Southern Baptist Convention in Chattanooga when the Grippe laid him upon his back again. But he usually played the philosopher in his moments of disappointment, and his sunny nature did not desert him in the present instance. And yet it was a sore deprivation to him to be kept from that Convention,— from its discussions and its fellowships.

Did the Convention miss him?

I went to the Convention and was kept busy receiving from the delegates the expressions of their sorrow at his absence, and their messages of love to him. I slipped into the hotel writing-room one day and dashed off the following epistle to him:

"CHATTANOOGA, TENN., May 13, 1906.

"DEAR GRANDFATHER,—I am very sure you do not know how much this Convention loves you. It is not simply admiration but love. It seems as if everybody has inquired anxiously about you and has sent loving messages to you.

"It does seem a pity that you cannot be here. You must surely keep yourself in good shape and be on hand next year. Everybody says they miss you and there seems general grief that you are sick and absent."

With this letter let us couple one or two other communications. One is a telegram that was sent to him from the President of the Convention, Ex-Governor Stephens, which reads:

"Your name on every tongue. Sympathy in every heart. We miss the sunshine of your presence. The whole Convention is praying for your recovery. Bealer joins me in this expression."

Another was from the Convention itself, sent through Dr. T. S. Dunnaway reading:

Digitized by Google

"The Convention after special prayer for your speedy recovery sends a message of sympathy and love."

Still another telegram was from Mrs. George Schmelz reading:

"Miss you so much. Do hope you are better,"

Rev. C. L. Corbitt, the new Superintendent of the Baptist Orphanage, writes him on May 19th:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—"I know you were greatly missed at the Convention; in fact I dont see how they could get along without you. If I were in the Lord's place I would let you live a hundred years longer, in truth I would make it two hundred upon a pinch. But then the Lord knows best and I am giving the matter up into his hands. I am begging him though to spare you many many years not only for the good of his Cause, but for my sake. You have been so kind and good to me. I not only appreciate it but I love you with all my heart."

Many persons remarked that one of their joys in coming to the Convention was the privilege of meeting him there. He delighted at such gatherings to open his heart to his brethren and his ears to the stories of their burdens, their struggles and their triumphs. "How many care-worn pastors," he once wrote, "bring their secret wounds with them to our great assemblies. . . . What a field it opens to the burden bearer. We can do no better thing than to open ear and soul to their cries of the heart and to stay long enough to take their burdens off and cast them on the Lord." Dr. Buckner of Texas said:

"He used to honor me and touch my heart, by affectionately insisting that I should sit by him on the platform at the gatherings of our great Southern Baptist Convention."

His strength soon returned and he sped away from Fork Union as if to make amends for his days of inactivity. He appeared to forget that his 72nd birthday was at hand as he took the train for a long journey to South Carolina

Digitized by Google

for a series of revival meetings, after which he returned to Fork Union and thence hastened to Ohio where, at the Denizon University at Granville, he was scheduled to speak at the Commencement exercisies. His rapid trips made his wife uneasy. She writes, "keep up with him and beg him to take better care of his voice. He is using it too much but I dont believe we can check him much."

She often during these later years asked me to join with her in efforts to check him in his overwork. It was a natural request but our efforts were as straws before a strong current. His soul clamored for work. He would listen to the exhortations of his family and friends about his overwork, would twit the speaker with playful jests and then take the next train for a dedication, a revival campaign, or a Board meeting. In the week after writing the above letter my mother writes me again:

"Dr. Hatcher performed numerous feats this week for one of his age. Just think of it—to Ohio Saturday, preaching sermon Sunday, returning to Richmond Tuesday, Alumni banquet Wednesday, Trustee meeting and Commencement at night, leaving at 11 P. M. train for Salem where he installed Charles Corbitt as Supt. of the Orphanage on Thursday and here today—somewhere distant next Sunday. . . Your father has just come in. He seems well and in good spirits."

There was one thing that he insisted upon almost as inexorably as he did upon his keeping at work and that was having his grandchildren at Careby in the Summer. For example he writes to William E. Jr. on July 3rd:

"I fairly leaped for joy when I got your letter written by Aba and signed with your own hand. I think it is a big thing to have a boy who can write his own name. It almost made tears come in my eyes when I read that you wanted me to come after you and bring you to Careby. You ought to be here. The trees are beautiful,—the grass in the yard is soft and green—the plums are ripe in the orchard—the bushes are laden with blackberries—the whortleberries are coming on—June apples are ripe and are going fast—Mammy's cows have milk for you

Digitized by Google

and Onie will make batter-cakes for you one morning and waffles the next. Virginia and Katherine have not come and Grandmother has no one to speak to but Ah Fong.

"Tell your mother that Careby Hall is waiting for you and that Brux and Britton will toss their heads and rattle their harness with joy when they go to Bremo to meet you.

"Ah Fong is at Careby Hall and he would shout for joy if you would come and I hope by all means you will make him shout."

Old age had long been knocking at his door. For several years his hearing had paid the penalty of its long usage and now his eye-sight was growing dim. My wife writes me from Careby:

"He said the other night that he was afraid that he would not be able to do much more writing on account of his eyes. I know how anxious you have been for him to do more writing."

Concerning old age he wrote:

"It is said that at forty-eight Thackery was gray, bowed and gloomy, fretfully brooding over the past. We must admit that it is not easy, except by tricks that are grotesquely vain, to keep the silver threads out of our hair, or even to keep the hair, with the silver threads included, on our heads. Nor is it always possible to preserve the erectness and elasticity of our forms, but it is folly, it is a sin in christians to grow dismal and downhearted as age comes on. A cheerful engrossment in our appointed work is an effectual safeguard against melancholy. . . If we would clothe our souls with perennial youth we must set our faces towards the future and rejoice in the living God."

He visited in September the Middle District Association in Maryland, where he preached a sermon on the Significance of Baptism. He dwelt the longest on the first three words of the text "Know ye not",—as if Paul would say in that passage (Romans VI, 4) to the christians who had long since been baptized: "What, know you not? Can it be that you were baptized and yet you do not know its rich meaning? Do you not know that "as many of you as were baptized etc?"

Digitized by Google

One of the ways by which he kept his heart young was by keeping it open to all the interests of Christ's kingdom. For example he remembered at this time that the great Seminary at Louisville was at the beginning of a new session and that through its doors now were crowding its students from all parts of the South and so in his editorial column in the Baptist World he writes as follows:

"We uncover our heads and make our bow to the scores and and scores of young princes in Israel just entering our great Seminary in Louisville. Hello, boys: Southern Baptists hail you and warmly approve your coming. Your opportunity is a miracle wrought for you by the great-hearted. Remember that and seize the prize set before you. Do not allow homes—sickness, nor messages found in square envelopes which reach you about twice a week, to be mistaken for emergency calls to quit school and go to preaching. Unless gumption and grit are short of measure in your case take no short cuts but stay in the middle of the road. . . May the Lord of our fathers anoint the sons of the prophets."

Some burdens at this time were pressing him very severely, and he was subjected to sore and exceedingly painful trials. His wife overheard him say to himself one day in an adjoining room, "Ah, this is a hard world."

At the General Association in Richmond in November his soul seemed to feast on its fellowships. His wife, in writing about the Association, said:

"Last night when there was about to come a hopeless tangle he rose and by his word brought relief to the situation."

He wrote me from Franklin, Va., of some engagements that he had for the next few weeks and added: "And then blessed idleness until after Christmas and still longer. I mean to put my type-writer in perfect shape and my mornings are to be given to those articles and reminiscences which seem to give you so much unnecessary trouble."

Christmas was approaching and he yearned for a family reunion at Careby. He wrote me: "Servants may forsake us,

Digitized by Google

but our companionship is better than stalled oxen or turkeys stuffed with oysters. Let us get together if we can." He said that his meeting at Franklin was "transcendently great."

To Dr. Andrew Broadus Jr., he writes on November 27th:

"It was just like you to write me that delightful letter. "Life abounds in complexities, and hard strains come to all and often in unexpected ways. This is a part of God's discipline. To be able to receive the cuts and slings of injustice and yet to keep the heart open and free from bitterness is no easy matter. And yet we must do this for if we fail in it we fail in character. . . . I love you with an ever ripening friendship."

He interjects a surprising parenthesis into his revival meetings at Troutville, viz., a trip to Richmond, spending two nights on the cars but missing only one day from the meetings.

"Think of it" he writes his wife. "Here I am in Richmond. Meeting of Trustees of Richmond College came this morning and I am going back tonight. Had a fine day here. Mr. Camp dined some of us at the Jefferson this afternoon in great pomp."

Regarding the night trips from Troutville, the pastor, Dr. George B. Taylor, thus writes:

"Notices came to each of us of an important called meeting of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College. I told Dr. Hatcher that he must go. . . He insisted on my going. So we arranged for a forced march. We left Troutville one night after the night service, went by way of Basic and the C. and O. R. R. to Richmond, this being an all night journey, without a "sleeper". At Basic, between trains, he dictated to me one of his articles to the *Baptist World*. . . We reached Richmond in the morning, spent the day there and took the N. and W. in the evening. The next morning we drove from Roanoke to Troutville, eleven miles and were then in time for the morning service. I tell of this to show how vigorous, enthusiastic, resourceful he was.

"And, in passing, I would say that he was a charming fellow traveler. This last remark reminds me of some hours with him after one of the Orphanage Board meetings at Salem. He asked

Digitized by Google

me to be his guest at supper in Roanoke at the N. and W. Restaurant. I accepted. We had a good supper and a season of good fellowship."

It would seem that his seventy two birthdays would have read the riot act to him against such strenuous activities as that of the Troutville-Richmond trip, but he knew that he was approaching the border line and he determined to keep up the high pressure. He was never so well and never so jubilant as when he was out upon the highways and hastening on with the King's business.

Regarding the Christmas reunion at Careby and the coming of the grandchildren he writes:

"Tell William that I am fairly shouting at the thought of our fruit feasts in the morning. We will wake the sleeping natives with the noise with which we will fill the house.

"I think we must have a new set of calls and the children will have to rehearse them so we can make the house roll and tumble with the thunder of our shouts. As for fruit we must have it stored away and not let any hands touch it except by our consent.

"I saw Virginia and Katherine a week ago. Their mother seemed a little doubtful about coming but I put my foot down and said "they had to" and I am sure it will be all right."

Attached to this letter was a sheet of paper on which he had written the following:

"Master William E. Hatcher Jr. and Miss Anna G. Hatcher are most lovingly invited to spend the Christmas Holidays with Grandfather and Grandmother at Careby Hall and to eat fruit in bed every morning before breakfast with the quartette of grandchildren. They must bring their largest voices with them so that they can shake Careby with their thundering shouts and wake up the drowsy members of the tribe."

It would seem—at first blush—as if "somebody had blundered" that this old man, now moving on towards his 73rd birthday, should in addition to countless other tasks be carrying upon his shoulders a large and growing Military Academy,

Digitized by Google

with practically the entire load resting upon him. It was not merely that he exercised general oversight over the institution but the management of the school, with even the details on the business side, was upon his mind and under his direction. Every burden put its pinch in his heart. He was expected to be the chief magnet to draw the pupils; if a note was to be made in bank, or if a $3,000 loan was needed in order to erect an Armory for the school the verdict was: "Let Dr. Hatcher do it." If teachers were to be employed, a new Catalogue prepared, or Commencement exercises arranged for, or speakers secured for the school opening, or boys trained for a special entertainment, or a new Commandant secured from the Government, or special rates decided upon for certain boys; or,—and yet how vain to attempt a list of the Academy tasks that were week by week tugging at his brain and putting their responsibilities upon his heart.

Let it not be concluded that the other Trustees were unsympathetic or disloyal. He found rich delight in the devotion of the local trustees to the school. They were in nearly every case plain, unlettered farmers, with no experience nor training that fitted them for conducting a great Academy. But they were sympathetic and stood loyally by their President and in many ways reinforced his labors in behalf of the institution. But with all this it was he who carried the load and the innumerable perplexities of management and upbuilding put many a thorn in his pillow.

In his visits to us in Baltimore we could read between the lines and see the Academy worries that were straining and ofttimes bewildering him. The school was the child of his heart, "and" said he "like our children generally they always give us our greatest joys and our greatest cares."

"The care of the school is very fearful upon me" he writes me on Dec. 10th. "It has points of peril that I have not had to deal with before. It uses much of my time and in that way lessens my income seriously. But I cannot let go. I was not built that way. I hope to come to Baltimore on

Digitized by Google

Jan. 2nd [for a dedication]. I have two meetings in Indiana and one in South Carolina."

He took pride in the thought that the Academy was a giver rather than a recipient. It had been his duty often to canvass Virginia for funds for other Baptist Schools and he knew that the denomination was heavily burdened. It gave him comfort to think that he had been able to pull his Academy along without troubling the denomination. Yea he rejoiced that he had done far more, he had made it a fountain of blessing in the aid and training that it had given to many a poor ambitious boy and in the sending out of well-equipped young men into the denomination to fill its pulpits, its professor's chairs and other positions of influence. It was this fact that cheered him and nerved him to his sacrifices and activities.

Let it be remembered that in connection with his labors for the Academy he was busy with manifold activities of other kinds,—such as conducting revival meetings in which he preached twice and sometimes three times a day, writing his weekly S. S. Lessons for the Baptist Teacher, furnishing editorial matter to different papers, participating in the meetings and work of various Boards and committees of a denominational character, dedicating churches, preparing special addresses, etc., etc.

We are next called upon to view him while grappling defiantly with sickness in his efforts to keep busy.

"Your father has been constantly at the typewriter" writes my mother "but has been sick for two days—working on his S. S. Lessons. He seems to enjoy writing. He got home on Monday worse for wear with a cold like Grippe. That night he was slightly delirious—as he always is, when he has a fever."

He went to Salem and there on Monday the battle went against him and his sickness laid him low. "Taken mournfully sick Monday" he writes. "Endured the pangs and woes of the meeting [Orphanage Trustees] and dragged my aching frame to Tom Shipman's in Roanoke and fell into as loving embraces

Digitized by Google

as were ever bestowed upon Angels when they were traveling in disguise. My sickness is Grippe—hard and harsh—filled with pricking pain and racking me as if I had met a martyr's doom. . . I shall doctor myself for my Baltimore trip and by the mercy of the Lord I hope to see you within a week."

Rev. Thomas Shipman, in whose home he was so lovingly entertained, thus writes to Mrs. Hatcher:

"Do you know that I am fully persuaded that he will go on to Baltimore for next Sunday and dedicate that church. You just can't hold him down. His life is worth too much to the people for him to overtax and expose himself at his age. He is our great leader and we can't spare him just now. Can't you get him to write, write more?"

"I doubt whether he ought to preach and speak so much" writes his wife. "Evidently his larynx is the delicate organ. I wish there was some way to get him to take better care of himself."

He went to Baltimore, stayed in our home and preached the dedicatory sermon at the new Second Baptist Church, after which he hurried—still sick—back to Richmond, from which point he wrote his wife to prepare for his coming on the late train that evening to Bremo:

"Coming up this evening. It is a risk, but put curtains on the buggy and plenty wraps. Tell Horace to use robe on horse at depot. Better bring lamp."

He went and his wife wrote that he arrived that night "when the weather was below zero"—after a drive of five miles from the depot. Dr. Mullins had invited him to speak at the Seminary in Louisville on Founder's Day and although he was sick yet he made the trip.

"The long jump to Louisville brings me pause" he writes "for I do not seem to be on the top crest of health. But travel seems the only saving exercise for me so far as health is concerned. I quit my bed to go from Roanoke to Lynchburg—quit Lynch-

Digitized by Google

burg for Baltimore and it agreed with me—quit Baltimore, in the face of stentorian protest, to go to Richmond and fattened on it—quit Richmond for Fork Union and here I am getting my going-temper up to the fighting point. I love Louisville but if it was to Baltimore I was starting I would feel new thrills. But let me not be ungrateful. Mrs. Marvin claims me as her guest and that is a clean sweep to royal honors.

"I am in a sub-cellar of despond about my speech but I trust the Lord will meet me at the crisis and pull me through. Cook sick at Careby and things not at the apple pie counter."

He went to Louisville and on the 19th he writes me:

"The time of my life. This has been the best.

"My poor skinny lecture drew a crowd and seemed to hit the bull's optic. Sunday I preached twice—at East Church in the morning and at Broadway at night. Had ripping crowds and folks went quite foolish."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVIII

1907

COMMENCES WRITING HIS NEW BOOK. BIOGRAPHY. COLGATE LECTURES. DELINEATING CHARACTER. WORKING AT HIGH PRESSURE. ADDRESS AT INDIANAPOLIS ON "THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN GENTLEMAN."

Friends communicated with Mr. Revell, the New York publisher, about the importance of enlisting Dr. Hatcher in the writing of one or more books. Writing of his visit to Louisville he says:

"Mullins is quite up on my books and urges me to write fast and often. I start home this evening."

He received a letter from Mr. Revell that quickened his pace in the matter of book writing. We had talked of two books,—one a book of Reminiscences and the other a book on John Jasper, the colored preacher of the "Sun Do Move" fame. Upon his return from Louisville he writes me further about his new book, in the production of which he is now becoming much interested:

"I have other stories of the sort that you sent to Mr. Revell. I can run them off quite fast and will do my best. But my lecture engagements, my editorial work and several trips on work intent crowd me up considerably.

"Dr. Mullins. . . was quite fierce in his enthusiasm about the publication as I knew he would be. He is surely the King of the Louisville Dominions.

He writes me on February 25th that he has decided to publish the book on "John Jasper" first and let the other publication come out later and then adds:

Digitized by Google

"I wish you would see also how many humorous stories—with a religious side to them—you would find acceptable with the publisher. The book ought to be departmental in a small sense. I could pile in things on the laughing side of my ministry and many of them have a serious undertone. Not one is touched with irreverence."

"Just from Winfree's" he writes his wife on March 6th; "Wrote Jasper's sermon on 'The Sun Do Move' while there. Am busy with stenographer on my New York lectures. I go to South Carolina tomorrow. Tell Horace to use this weather repairing fences at farm."

Regarding the plan of the Jasper book he writes; "I must eschew the old run of biographic history and give it a dash of the genuine Jasper." In other words, his new book is to be,—not a history but a picture of Jasper. Is there not much literary philosophy couched in those words "a dash of the genuine Jasper." It was as if he would say that the mere historical details of Jasper's life might not show "the genuine Jasper." Such historical details could easily conceal or distort the real man. It was his purpose that the Jasper in his book should be the genuine article and his expression "a dash" indicates that he has in mind a sketch rather than a full, life-sized oil painting. His remark takes a fling at what he calls "the old run of biographic history" and speaks of it as something that he would "eschew". I have looked upon the rows of biographies so many of which stand in undisturbed quiet upon the shelves of our public libraries. I have wondered if the present book would join the dust-covered company. This timid writer has already taken the reader into his confidence by telling him that he too is seeking to "eschew the old run of biographic history" and to present a picture of the genuine William E. Hatcher and if the curiosity of any reader may not be satisfied in these pages as to the particular places visited by Dr. Hatcher, or the dates on which his performances occured, it is hoped that he will feel more than compensated in discovering the individual behind the deeds; for it is not the visible

Digitized by Google

movements of the man, but rather the personality hidden under the daily activities, that enlists our interest.

His letter to me, which is referred to above, was as follows:

"I hope you have copies of all the articles written thus far. . . . I am going out today and look for three or four officers of Jasper's church and gather some things if possible that will go further in giving us all the material we want.

"I am not sure that I desire to have the book called 'The Sun Do Move.' It would really belie the character of the book. . . . It [the sermon on "The Sun do move"] was really one of the most eloquent and powerful sermons that he ever preached. . . . Tomorrow I go to Edgefield, S. C.

"P. S.—I called on one of the dignitaries of Brother Jasper's church this afternoon and struck the track of what I hope will prove much valuable information. . . . I must eschew the old run of biographic history and give it a dash of the genuine Jasper."

South Carolina seemed to attract him and during the remainder of his life it became a frequent tramping ground for him in his revival meetings. From Edgefield, in that state, he writes on March 16th, "Life is at high tide in this historic county seat at this moment. Our meeting is simply glorious. It fills me with grateful wonder."

"I wish" writes his wife "he could write shorter letters to folks. But they are often personal letters from folks who want him to help them and he has a mind always to do a good part by them; that is right I suppose."

Dr. A. J. Fristoe was holding meetings at the Academy and as he caught sight of Dr. Hatcher at Careby Hall in the midst of his labors he thus writes:

"Dr. Hatcher is one of the busiest men I have ever seen. Knowing he was no longer identified with a responsible pastorate I supposed that his duties would not be so numerous but I found quite the contrary to be true. His correspondence is large, lectures for universities, colleges and Seminaries are being prepared, newspapers are clamoring for the products

Digitized by Google

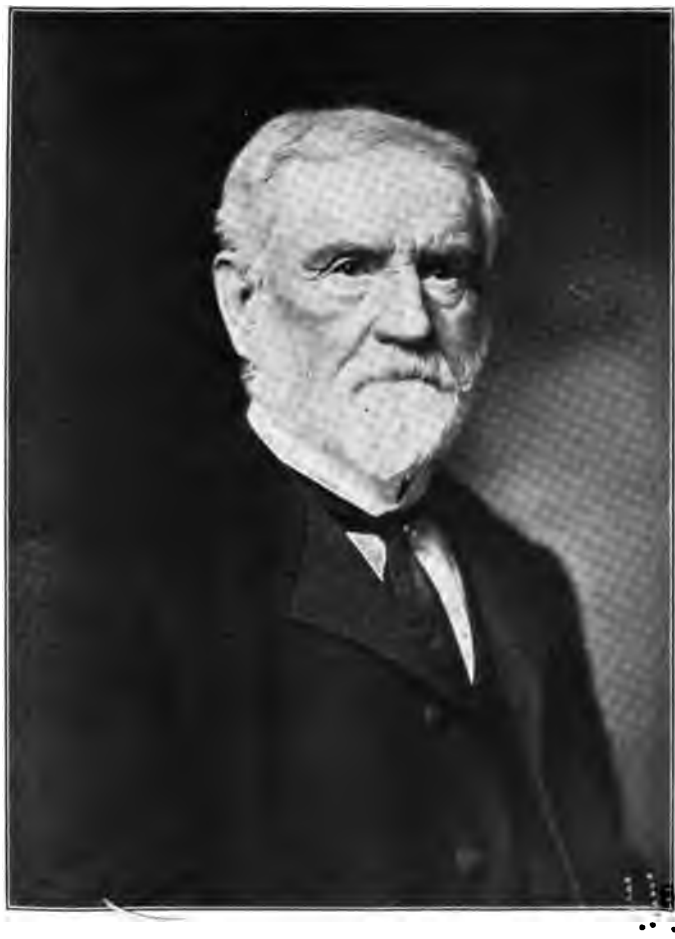
of his pen and at no distant date several books will be ready for the press. And, beside all this, Richmond College, Fork Union Academy, the Orphanage, the Education Commission and other great interests of Virginia Baptists require his close identification and actually before my meeting was half over he was wired to attend a funeral in Richmond and proceed thence to South Carolina to hold a meeting. May God spare him to us many years."

In the previous year he had been prevented by sickness from delivering three lectures at Colgate Seminary and he had agreed to deliver them in April of the present year. About April 1st he arrived in Hamilton, New York, to perform his promised task,—that of speaking out of a ministry of fifty years to a body of young preachers. He delivered three lectures. The first one was on "The Imperishable Things." In his introduction to this lecture he recognized the upheaval in the world of Biblical scholarship and he said that many timid souls feared that this scientific inquiry threatened disaster to the Bible. He pleaded for an openness to the truth. "Let us be willing to know the truth and let us take time to find it out. Let us not be uneasy lest the foundations of the righteous be destroyed."

He then singled out four facts regarding the christian ministry, which amid earths' changes and uncertainties stood out as imperishable. These were: I. The ministry itself. II. The ministry-producing force. III. The demand for the ministry. Under this head the speaker said: "No man can read the signs of the time, as they are written on passing events, without feeling that there is a new spirituality—shadowy, indistinct and yet undeniable—that is throbbing in the air of this world. Materialism is balked and mortified by its failures. It heard the cry of the soul asking to be fed; it had nothing but the stone and the scorpion to give in reply. IV. The order for the universal enforcement of the gospel;—which he said was "the most audacious and startling word that human lips ever uttered, —the Great Commission."

His second lecture was—but perhaps some reader of a non-theological turn of mind may think it a waste of space to be

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

retailing here the thoughts that were presented to a Seminary audience. And yet the reader might permit us to remind him that this book is a sort of open Commons where one may roam at pleasure and if he finds himself persecuted in one part he may flee unto another, and who knows but that some readers may, in lighting upon these cullings from Dr. Hatcher's lectures, rejoice as if he had found some fine gold; and beside it is a principle in literary culture that the mind should not follow too slavishly the narrow path of its own preferences, but should sometimes at least widen the range of its studies and browse in pastures new. If the reader thinks that these comments and side remarks might be dispensed with let him understand that they are interjected in mercy to him, to serve as resting places along his way as he journeys through these pages, and possibly, also, as contrasts to the bulk of the material with which this book is filled. Fielding says in his history of Tom Jones, "Judicious writers have always practised this art of contrast with great success. . . . . The Jeweler knows that the finest brilliant requires a foil and the painter, by the contrast of his figures, often acquires great applause." If the reader therefore should weary of such collateral disquisitions, as being dulness embodied, let him use them to set off to even greater advantage the gleanings and incidents from Dr. Hatcher's life which constitute the other portions. A humorous writer of a century or more ago "told the public that whenever he was dull they might be assured there was design in it," and with this ancient writer as my authority, and trusting that the reader will after these reminders withdraw his objections, I will take up the second Lecture which bore the unique title of "The man who arrives" and it must be understood at the outset that this subject is simply an old acquaintance decked up in new and more becoming attire and known on the street, or in the market place, as "the man who gets there" and as he was addressing young preachers he had in mind, of course, "the preacher who arrives." He then proceeds to mention four things that the effective minister must have.

Digitized by Google

"I. The power of adaptation,"—and this he defines as "the power to grapple surprises."

"II. The power of discovering relationships." This quality with him seemed to stand almost first in his list of ministerial qualifications. He thought that great men differed from small men largely in their ability to see things in their relation to other things. He always seemed afraid of the man who could see only one thing at a time.

"A truth seen outside of its family is a stranger" said he. He spoke of the evils and perils of half truths. "John Calvin" said he "had his study in Geneva and from his window could behold the eternal glaciers of the Alps. Had he been born on the other side of the mountains and beheld the woodland, the lake and the sunlight of Italy he would have hardly believed there could be a glacier."

"3. The capacity for the gradation of duties."

"4. Mastery over men. The minister must be the princeliest man in his church—well rounded, with his infirmities under cover, with no apologetic note, without whine or sob, bright, strong, commanding—a leader of the people."

The third lecture had for its subject, "The fourfold relation of the Minister." In this lecture he dealt with the minister as he is in the act of giving his message to his audience, and the central, dominating thought of the lecture was that the *personality of the preacher is a vital element in the sermon.*

"The gospel" says he "furnishes the divine element of the sermon and the preacher contributes the human element and whenever these two come together into sweet accord and the human and the divine are blended in due proportion then the sermon will inevitably carry immeasurable power."

The speaker then unfolded the four things which should mark the minister "who appears before the public with a message."

"1. He must be the master of his own personality."

"It was scathingly said of one preacher that he would have

Digitized by Google

been great but for the fact that he was everlastingly in his own way. . . Oh, it is a matchless sight—a minister who moves with unstudied grace, carried unconscious dignity and does and says the fitting thing."

"2. He must be in fellowship with his audience. Not that he must dream and scheme to please, . . He who trims his sails to catch the passing breeze will be lost on a calm sea. . . Nor must a man trifle with his audience. . . The true minister reverences his audience. They are to him creatures of God, bearing about them marks of a majestic origin and wearing the signs of a noble destiny. . . If he touches the evil in them it is with a surgeon's blade but always with a gentle hand."

"3. There must be kinship between the preacher and his sermon. He must be the father of the sermon; not the step-father, not its adopted father. It must be the child of his brain, his culture and his travail. . It takes a spiritual man to make a sermon, and, even more, a spiritual man to preach it well. It is a serious business to make sermons and only fools stop you on the street, whisk out their note books and spin off their sickly little analyses as if they had gotten their new messages from the throne."

"The sermon without the man is at best just one half of a sermon. Jesus himself charged his teaching with the electric force of his own personality."

"4. There must be a good understanding between the minister and his master. . . We cannot preach a living gospel unless we are in living fellowship with God."

"Oh, why do not men preach? What is the matter with us? . . . I take up the lament of Jeter, one of the greater men of the South,—'Oh, that I could preach! I cannot preach. I never have preached. My heart fails me lest I quit the earth without ever preaching a worthy sermon.'"

"Some make sermons, but cannot preach them; some can preach, but cannot forge the thunder-bolts of truth. Lord send us the sermon-maker, the man with a message who can wake the dead by delivering it."

He gave them the cream of his thinking and of his experience as a preacher and it is not surprising that there was an urgent demand for the publication in permanent form of the lectures. He yielded to the request of the University by

Digitized by Google

writing out for publication his second lecture, "The man who arrives."

It was rare that he remained in a community of choice men for many days that his soul did not single out some congenial spirit. At Colgate he and Dr. Arthur Jones, professor of Homiletics, formed a friendship that continued to the end. Dr. Hatcher had in him a trait that often made him find pleasure in taking issue with another. Frequently in dealing with men, instead of seeking to keep his dealings on a placidly aimable and harmonious level he would assume the aggressive. He liked a contest, ofttimes preferring a conversational tussle and he liked a man who did not always agree with him. For example, he writes concerning his experiences with Dr. Jones of Colgate:

"My home was with that matchless Homiletical Wrangler, Dr. Arthur Jones. What happiness it was? Didn't we fling care and sorrow to the wind and have storms of dispute, enjoyment and love? I would think it cheap to cross the ocean to have it over again. Every hour brought its pleasure and to the Doctor and his most hospitable wife I am greatly indebted."

His programme for the next few weeks was varied. From Colgate he took a long dash to Dillon, S. C. where he wrote that "the meeting rose to celestial heights", He hurried back to Fork Union and after writing that at Dillon every store and office had closed for the services he ended his letter by saying. "Things look interesting and happy here but I grunt at the sight of my letter pile." This pile had been accumulating during his Colgate and his Dillon visits, and then he adds, "I go to Georgia next Thursday". And thus it went week by week. From one state to another, and in widely different forms of ministerial activity, he kept driving ahead with his labors, working while it was day.

He was such a lover of men that he was frequently called upon to write or speak tributes in honor of prominent men who had recently died. The family of a departed leader would often turn to him as the one who could speak the fitting word.

Digitized by Google

We have already called attention to his power of analysis in delineating character. It was striking how honest he could be in his portraiture of men without being in any way offensive. He was asked to deliver the funeral address of one of the most distinguished Baptist laymen that Virginia ever produced. The occasion was a memorable one and before the service he went to a prominent son in the family and said to him, "You have asked me to deliver this address. I want you to understand that I shall seek to give a full and true portrait of your father and shall not seek to cover up any of his faults."

"You have an open track, Doctor" he replied.

The address made a profound impression. His happy art in portraying character grew out of his manner of dealing with men. The conventionalities and customs of people about him were to him surface traits which often concealed or obscured the person underneath instead of revealing him. He carried on his negotiations with the real man within.

Even in the case of little children their pretty ways and cute mannerisms did not particularly impress him. He wanted to see the real boy, or girl, underneath these little nicities of manner. He could never make any headway in becoming interested in babies. As for caressing the little things and of frolicking with them as if they were playthings he could not and would not. He would say in the case of his grandchildren "I'm waiting for them to get companionable." Ofttimes when he was watching some little ones who were playing near him and when it was thought he was noticing their antics, their movements or their looks he would say, "That boy is a philosopher; see what he did" or he would point to another child saying, "That's perseverance." In other words, beneath the chatter and rompings of the children, he saw qualities and characteristics and it was for these that he was always looking, and until the children became old enough to show some individuality and traits he could not become particularly interested in them,—though even in the case of the infants he would

Digitized by Google

often remark on the "defiance" or "rebellion" or "disgust" that their cries indicated.

It seemed that he loved to speak at the funerals of men of mark not only because of his desire to honor their memory but also because the delineation of character was an act that he keenly enjoyed. His mind seemed to carry so clearly the outlines and lineaments of individuals that when their personality was to be unveiled at their funerals he found pleasure in the unveiling.

Upon learning one day at Careby of the sudden death of a gentleman who had been greatly estranged from him he said, "I would like to speak at his funeral. I could do it better than anybody else." This remark which was made to his daughter in his office sounded strange, as having the appearance of boasting, but he had seen the man under such different lights during his life and understood him so well,—knew his strong, as well as his weak, qualities—that he hated to see such an individual quit the earth with out a full and fair portrait of him being held before his friends and neighbors. It was an unpremeditated outburst and showed his love for delineating character. His address at the memorial service of his cherished friend, Dr. A. E. Owen, began with the words:

"When Dr. Garrett, the chieftain of this generous hour, asked me to be present and speak today I confess that my heart bounded with pleasure, much chastened and yet so intense, that I could hardly contain myself."

After stating that he knew too well that no speech of his could equal the occasion he proceeded to dissect the character of Dr. Owen and to lay its different parts before the audience:

"He was powerfully, dangerously ambitious and but for the counteracting principle of fairness and justice he would have gone to ruin.

"His conversion was the centralizing and all changing event in his life.

"He wore his faults on his sleeve. Mark the worst that he

Digitized by Google

was as you saw him day by day and I can safely say there was nothing worse behind.

"His complacent self respect, sometimes a theme for criticism, was one justified by a rare and lofty appreciation of other people.

"I dare say that the happiest moment of Dr. Owen's life was when he received the call from God to preach the gospel. He fairly leaped with exultant joy that such an honor had come to him.

"His piety was too deep to flaunt itself, but how it cried and pleaded and wept in his sermons. I loved Owen for many things and most of all for his utter lack of mock modesty, his freedom from simulated humility, his childlike candor and his beautiful transparency."

In his memorial tributes to Christian men it seemed to be his almost invariable custom to follow them to the other world. He took his parting with them at the heavenly rather than the earthly gate. Many of his addresses could be mentioned that end in this fashion but there will be given here merely the closing picture in his tribute to Dr. Owen:

"Ah, when I was riding the train from Philadelphia to Virginia and saw the telegraphic announcement of his death, the earth shook, my soul sank and darkness covered the hills. I hid my face and my soul got a glimpse of him as he sped beyond the stars and entered through the gates into the city. I felt poorer and yet I rejoiced that he had seen his Savior's face."

Another one of his greatly prized friends died,—Dr. T. P. Matthews of Manchester, Va. The Doctor had a character that greatly appealed to him. At his funeral he drew his portrait:

"Our brother" said he "stood on solid ancestral foundations. You do not grow giant trees without fineness of strain in the acorn. Blood, as a rule, makes the winning racer. Sometimes, I know, great families degenerate and wither under the waste of vices, and now and then those of low degree break away from their entanglements, leap over upper grades and mount to the top.

Digitized by Google

"We are glad it is so, but, as a rule of nature, it takes generations to produce a high and commanding man. Our ancestors live in us and it takes virtue and fibre of three generations to make men what they ought to be. Science and the Bible hold the doctrine of heredity as true and as solemn as the day of doom.

"If you are curious to account for Dr. Matthews you must hunt up the old family records in the Bibles of his fathers and read the inscriptions on the slabs and granite columns in the old ancestral graveyards."

"Dr. Matthews could not shake off the consciousness of an honored manhood. He was by nature self assertive. His self respect was so inherent that he was never apologetic, never on the defensive, never trying to explain why he was not otherwise than he was."

"He despised cheap and spurious things and would neither buy nor sell them. When I characterize my beloved friend as an honest man I speak of his inner being, his essential self, his genuineness and reality."

The same gift that enabled him to preach great sermons on characters in the Bible also enabled him to portray vividly the characters of men of his own times.

Concerning the death of his friend Dr. W. S. Penick he writes:

"Dear old friend, many of those who loved you in the beginning have outstripped you in the march to the eternal world. Hosts of ministers and others who loved you await you on the other side and the thought of our separation from you is softened by the recollection that you had a royal reception when you entered the city of light. Good bye until we meet again."

One of the products of his pen was a series of "Character Sketches", written at odd moments of time and published in different papers. His characters were nearly always ministers, such as "Rev. Magnus Ego," "Rev. Mr. Scowler," "Rev. Absalom Bustler," "Rev. Matthew Mattix," etc. The following paragraphs are culled from his sketch of Mr. "Bustler."

"Bro. Bustler is emphatically a flitter. No tender-footed bird ever hopped from limb to limb, from tree to earth quite

Digitized by Google

so fast as our brother can whip from one thing to another. No place can contain him. No company can engage him. No book can absorb him. No duty can hold him. He always feels that the thing he is doing is an obstacle in the way of countless things which he ought to be doing. His thoughts put his hands to work at one place and then go dashing off after something else and before his hands have grappled their task they are suddenly ordered to some other point. Of course sobriety of thought and rational processes are things impossible with him. His poor mind gets sick, reels and blunders in hopeless confusion because never allowed time for meditation.

"Mr. Bustler almost amounts to a circus in the Sunday school. By some odd fate he plunges into the Sunday school room at the most ill considered moment. One time he sprang in during the reading of the Scripture and spying a stranger over beyond the pulpit he went whirling by, stumbled over a chair, nearly fell prostrate and greeted the stranger with such noisy rapture that the Scripture lesson was a disaster. The teachers in the school make grievous complaint. They say that he plunges into their classes at the most serious points, insists on a hand shake with everybody, asks after the several families represented by the class and frequently fires off an irrelevant and ludicrous story. One teacher made it a rule to lock his room while the lesson was going on, but that very morning Brother Bustler was charged with messages for five different families and thundered and crashed at the door until the door was reluctantly opened. He delivered two or three of his messages, forgot two or three of them and closed his visit with a pathetic story the pathos of which was futile and disagreeable.

"The music of the Sunday school is one of his specialties—he breaks up programs, calls for unsuitable songs, criticises the singing and beats time as if he were fighting hornets, greatly to the confusion of the music and to the noisy amusement of the small boys.

"Our brother is almost sinfully punctual He feels it solemnly incumbent upon him to begin the service on the stroke of the clock. He fixes himself at the entrance to the pulpit, he catches the stroke of the clock and bounds into the pulpit like an athlete and throws up his hands as a sign for the people to rise to their feet. His promptness is absolutely ferocious and shocks the nerves of the old people and startles

Digitized by Google

the congregation in a dangerous and racking way. If he discovers visitors in the congregation he either beckons for the ushers or bounds out of the pulpit with a view of seeing that the new comers are supplied with hymn books. Now and then if old people are brought in or persons hard of hearing come in he meets them down the aisle and brings them up. He is the most consequential hand shaker that ever performed in his community. It is rather offensive to some of his people to see him spring from the pulpit and go storming down the aisle in order to hem in the crowd and shake with the outgoers. Most of the people try to avoid him by escaping through other doors; some are quite overwhelmed by his prolonged hand shakes."

During the Summer his schedule called for visits to Associations, and sermons and addresses of all kinds. He had reached a condition in life for which he had often yearned and that was a condition of freedom to go and to labor wherever he might wish. His income, while not large, was sufficient for the needs of himself and his family and enabled him to respond to the calls for his labors—and no music was so sweet to his ears as these calls. If the calls had stopped coming to him he would have been in his grave. But he went, went in every direction, went to the little churches as well as to the large ones, visited the obscure country lad as well as the man high in official life, went into other states as well as through Virginia. All over Virginia this summer men were meeting Dr. Hatcher on the train, or in their communities, and as they greeted him they were wondering that at his advanced age, he kept so young and labored so indefatigably.

"Here I am this Monday morning" he writes to his wife on July 22nd from Careby Hall "head over heels at work with my correspondence, mailing catalogues and getting ready to go away tomorrow. I go to the Dover Association tomorrow and to Elizabeth City Friday. Next week I go to the Rappahannock Association which meets in the Northern Neck.

"I went yesterday to the Buckingham church. Ah Fong went with me and he is invited to speak at one of the Buckingham churches this week. . I have quite decided twinges of sciatica and walk bent and with a sort of side step."

Digitized by Google

After holding his fourth series of evangelistic meetings at Wake Forest College he went to Indianapolis, where he delivered an address before the Baptist Social Union of that city. The subject was "The Building of the American Gentleman."

"A gentleman", says he, "is supposed to be the best output, the finest product, of the civilization of the country to which he belongs. . . . Every country and even every barbarous tribe produces its best man."

The speaker then proceeds to tell how America has been seeking by devious ways to bring her own best man, her "gentleman", to completion so that she could regard him as a finished product. "In colonial times" said he "the scions of the titled classes were shipped to this country,—usually not the best material". Having failed to build our gentlemen out of this imported stock we have,—according to the speaker,—"built our gentlemen after foreign models." After referring to Washington's weakness for knee buckles and powder and Jefferson's hankering for French habits and many people's preference for clothes with a British misfit he affirms that "when the American gentleman arrives his *Americanism* will be his distinguishing mark."

"I had a friend" he says "one of the noblest of all the earth—who said to me in the prime of his manhood that his supreme aspiration, from his youth, was to be a gentleman, but that he had concluded reluctantly that it was beyond his attainment. Through many years he and I would meet and I would ask him how went the struggle. 'I have seen him' he would say. 'but not with these mortal eyes. I have glimpsed him in visions of enraptured fancy and the sight thrilled me, but it is too high for me; it is vain to hope. I cannot attain unto it but the vision has enobled me and though I die outside the gate I will feel the better that I saw the gentleman in my dream.' I thought that my friend was like a prince and he was and yet he was not a gentleman."

"The gentleman for whom we are searching must not be simply a gentleman but he must be an American gentleman. . . . What is America. . . It is . . . a country which

Digitized by Google

stands on the platform which offers every citizen a chance. Not that every citizen can be a gentleman, nor that all can be equal, but the essential American idea is to give every man a chance to work out his destiny.

"I lay it down as my closing proposition that every Baptist ought to be a gentleman. . . . The fundamental idea of a Baptist is personal responsibility."

He went to Franklin, Indiana where he enjoyed some delightful hours with his friend, President E. B. Bryan. After his visit to Franklin he wrote the following letter to Dr. Bryan that exhibits two of his traits,—his interest in young people and his enthusiasm for progress:

"I must not forget to extend to you my soul's tribute for your exceeding gracious hospitality. My visit to your home was a pleasure unmixed and can never be forgotten.

"My heart warmed for the scarred slugger who sat across the table from me and I feel that when your hair grows gray and twinges of pain wrench your knees he will be a tower of strength for you to lean upon. I marked too the radiant face of what I suppose is too large to call your baby.

"Most of all my thoughts have gone out to Miss Helen who is now on Virginia soil and whose prosperity I must not cease to pray for.

"Let me add that the College was a surprise to me. Signs of growth and prosperity in any good thing are intoxicants always to me, but—what was far better than that—was the spirit of the school, intangible, potent and refreshing."

He put Louisville on his schedule for this Western trip and wrote me from that city:

"My Dear E,—Here I am at dear old Louisville. I ate supper with the Carys last night and was in imminent danger of being eaten up by the Carys.

"I supply the pulpit at Broadway tomorrow and go Monday to Huntingdon, W. Va., where I am to help Wood in a meeting. My visit to Indianapolis was fine in many things but crippled sorely by a storm,—a wild, blowing, beating, tempestuous rain. My theme was, 'The building of the American Gentleman' and I dont think he was quite up to the mark after I got him

Digitized by Google

built. I know if he was a gentleman I did not feel like one when I got through. Of course the delicious platitudes of such an occasion were lavished upon me and mitigated my sorrows in a measure.

"The radiant episode in my trip was a day spent at Franklin College. It was rich in many things, some of which I may tell you about in the future.

"I understand that Dr. B. H. Carroll takes me to task in the Western Recorder for some things in the appeal which I made recently for the Seminary. I have not seen the article but I am a great lover of Dr. Carroll and there can be no strife between me and him, nor between my bondsmen and his bondsmen. I can make no reply that will not be absolutely fraternal. Meanwhile my soul is righteously burdened about our Seminary. I glory much in what it is and sigh much for the things it ought to be and will be, but is not yet. We ought to have a million more for its endowment."

During his Louisville visit he took a meal one day with the young ministers at the Seminary and one of them thus referred in the papers to his visit:

"This princely father in Israel whose pen and voice have edified so many thousands, dined with us in the hall and upon invitation made a most felicitous response before the students."

He went the latter part of November to Huntington, W. Va., to aid Dr. M. L. Wood in meetings.

Dr. Wood thus writes in the Herald concerning his visit:

"Though the passing winters have bleached his locks into snowy whiteness, still his bow abides in strength. . . As he has grown older his spirit has grown mellower in grace and his preaching is characterized by a tenderness and pathos that is winsome and beautiful. . It seems to have been a joy to him to cheer the obscure lad with a friendly notice."

He delivered a memorial address on Dr. J. W. Carter, who died during his meetings at Huntington, and in the address he said of Dr. Carter, "He went to sleep at night and next morning woke up in Heaven."

Digitized by Google

He writes me two days before Christmas:

"Here is a letter from dear old Bob Winfree—nobilissimus frater—begging with hysteric fondness that we will come to his house next Friday and go out on Sunday to a meeting at Tomahawk and come home on Monday. There is enchantment in the invitation, but I doubt whether we can accept it. I am about willing however to leave the matter to you and if you say so I will meet you Friday in Richmond and we will try the charming adventure.

"But how could we? Dear me, what shall we do? Do what we may we will wish we had done the other and yet we can be happy in doing either. What do you say?"

"Monday 3 P. M.

"Orie just come."

A gentleman had written to him asking him for his opinion on two subjects; first, the date when "the first Baptist church" was organized, and second, the doctrine of "Apostolic Succession". In his reply, regarding the "first Baptist church" he refers him to the early accounts of the Apostles, and adds that the "churches spoken of in the New Testament are the churches after which our Baptist churches are modeled. They have the same ordinances, the same terms of admission, the same independence and the same spirit of brotherhood." Regarding "Apostolic Succession" he writes:

"Apostolic Succession is the rediculous sand upon which some people undertake to build what they call a Historical Church. The Apostles had no successors and if any body has an Apostolic church it must be the Roman Catholics for they are the oldest.

"Those who know more about church history than I do claim that there have been churches of our faith and order straight through from the time of the Apostles. I think that there is much proof in favor of their claim but I do not build on that at all. If you were one great sinner, living far away in a community of sinners—not a christian anywhere near—and if you should get hold of a Bible and study it earnestly and faithfully and be gloriously converted by the power of God and God should call you to preach the gospel and bless you with con-

Digitized by Google

verting power and multitudes should be saved and you should take them and baptize them in the name of the Trinity and they, after accepting the Scripture as the Word of God, should set up a church after the order of a New Testament church requiring conversion and believers baptism and organize themselves for worship and work it would really be a Baptist church and just like the churches named in the New Testament."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXIX

1908

MEETINGS AT EUTAW PLACE, BALTIMORE; FRANKLIN COLLEGE, IND.; TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON, AND COLGATE UNIVERSITY, N. Y. CONVENTION AT HOT SPRINGS. VARIED ACTIVITIES. RAILROAD ACCIDENT. "JOHN JASPER."

The year 1908 was destined to bring him some rich experiences and was one of the most memorable years of his life. He conducted a very successful series of meetings in January at the Eutaw Place Church and we had the joy of having him in our home during the time. During this visit he made great progress on the Jasper book.

"Eldridge and myself have done valorous service on the immortal John [Jasper]" he writes his wife. "Our plan is to have about forty thousand words in sight."

I wrote on my typewriter at his dictation and the words came from him as fast as I could write them and they went practically unchanged to the publisher.

"It depressed me to break the charm of my lovely sojourn in your home," he writes me. "I cannot recall in all my life happier times than we had together."

"Our meeting at Troutville" he writes on January 30th "closed in a blaze of glory. . . had a happy night with Kate and got to Careby yesterday afternoon."

The First Baptist Church of Baltimore invited him to become supply pastor at this time but his plans for the future made him

Digitized by Google

unable to accept the invitation. From Franklin College, Indiana where he went to hold revival meetings he writes:

"I am idling away my time today with speaking at the High School and afterwards at the College this morning, then going to the country for dinner, finishing my S. S. Notes and am engaged to go out for supper this evening and have the services at the church tonight."

He writes to Rev. R. H. Winfree, of Midlothian Chesterfield County:

"The joys of my visit here seem to come from the very river of life.

"But no worldly joy or honor could ever change my love for you and yours and my last visit to your house was loaded with richest pleasures. It makes me sad, however, when I leave your house because I get there so rarely and I wonder how soon I shall make my last leap from the Midlothian train.

"I hope you are preaching great sermons—you are capable of them and you must surprise your people with every new homiletical shot."

"*Thursday morning.* Great meeting last night. You ought to have seen the men come up".

From Parkersburg, W, Va., whither he went from Franklin, he writes to Dr. E. B. Bryan:

"My soul's friend,—I count it as one of God's great mercies that he has allowed me to know you. My firste taste of you in November quickened the coursing of my blood and made every thought of you a pleasure.

"But let me say that my incomparable experience in Franklin lately put everything up higher. My heart took you in without examination and admitted you to the inner court of love and fellowship. Now I find that every thought of you is an inspiration and a joy.

"The Lord was extravagant in his bestowment of power upon you and I am glad to see that he requires that all of it shall be used for him. I rejoice that you live in an atmosphere of sobriety, that the light of Heaven gleams always on your pathway and that the future is yours as well as the past.

"This is purely a love letter. I have no need of your grind-

Digitized by Google

stone, and have money enough left me during the week and do not want to be recommended to any position, unless you are willing to strangle the 'Powls' and, with their blood upon you, are willing to name me as their successor.

"Give a world of love to Mrs. Bryan and the children. Tell Julian that I am not quite sure whether he would suit better for the new Baptist university which we are to have at Pekin, or whether I would prefer for him to be the U. S. Attorney General in 1928 when he will be strong enough to show his Baptist colors seven days in a week in the city of Washington. Say to Mrs. Bryan that she has quite an interesting proposition on her hands to get three children fully equipped to lead the millennial march in the next generation. Tell her that she is due in Virginia and that I want the whole Bryan contingent to breathe Vriginia air and get into their blood some of the ozone which made Washington, Munroe, Lee and did a great deal in making Kentucky and Indiana.

"Yours to the end of the run."

In reply Dr. Bryan wrote as follows on March 14:

"Your good letter came while I was away lecturing in Michigan. I have read it over and over again and every time I read it I have a new spoke put into my wheel. If you can realize in only a small way how much good you have done me and what a blessing you have been to me since first we met, you will not regret any time that you have spent in our midst. You have rendered a large and permanent service to the college and I am sure that the results of your work cannot be told in time. I was walking with ———— this afternoon and acting upon the suggestion carried in your letter, I pounded him in the small of the back, which by-the-way, was all over his back because his back is small all over. I'll tell you, he's a dear good man and is doing great things for us.

"At the table this evening Julian said that there were twenty-one boys out to the first Base-ball practice. He is short a pitcher and wondered if you could serve—he said he did not think they would get on to your curves. I am really expecting large things of the boy if he can ever find time to stop and sit up and take notice.

"I should be very glad to have letters from you from time to time. Nothing could give me a larger boost and certainly, when I go flat, as I suppose most men do at times, I need a

Digitized by Google

tremendous stimulus to bring me up. Mrs. Bryan wishes to be remembered most kindly to you and expresses the hope that we may have you in our home many times.

"With all good wishes for your services and kindness to the College and to me personally I remain.

"Yours Affectionately

"E. B. Bryan."

"I am suffering much in my back and other things" he writes his wife from Parkersburg. "I am wondering whether I am not near the pulling off station."

"What a record you are making", writes Mr. David E. Johnson, a Parkersburg attorney, "and keeping it up at the same old pace now when you may be seventy-five,—though as young as when I first saw you forty years ago. Oh, the *physical* man may be aged a little, but that *is'nt the man.* You never preached better in your life, I think. . . I want to thank you especially for that discourse yesterday."

But already two important revival campaigns loom on his path,—the first to be held at Tremont Temple, Boston and the other at Hamilton, New York, the seat of Colgate University. The pastor of Tremont Temple—at that time one of the most prominent churches in the United States,—was Dr. P. S. Henson, himself about seventy-four years old, while Dr. Hatcher was the same age. Far back in the sixties—during the days of the war—he and Dr. Henson had been yoked together in a country revival meeting at old Fine Creek in Powhatan County and it looked as if Dr. Henson could never out-grow the memory of those happy days; and in his large city pastorates he ever seemed to hanker after getting Dr. Hatcher to come and hold a protracted meeting with him. I remember meeting him in Chicago once and he said to me, "Oh, tell your father to come out here and let us hold an old fashioned protracted meeting together." His wish was now to be realized. He had already written Dr. Hatcher telling him of the extensive preparations that were being made for the meetings and he then adds:

Digitized by Google

"Please let me know the precise time of your expected arrival, so that we may meet you and safe-guard you against the bunco steerers that are always lying in wait for the tender foot."

On January 27th, Dr. Henson writes again:

"My Dear Old Boy,—The assurance of your coming to us has given great delight to my people and myself. . . Our congregations range from 2,000 to 3,000 and more eager hearers no man ever had than one finds in the Temple. It is the easiest and altogether the best preaching place I was ever in and if a man can't preach there he can't preach anywhere, so that if you dont have the time of your life then I shall know that you are N. G.

"Let me know meanwhile, and at an early date, about what time you may be expected to show your 'head-light' in Boston that we may have the round house ready.

"With much love and great hope.

"Yours Ever,

"P. S. Henson."

He looked forward with heavy anxieties to his Boston meetings. They began on April 2nd, and it must have been an interesting sight to see these two veterans of many a campaign linked together in such a movement in such a city and in such a church. Extensive preparations had been made. From Boston he writes on April 4th:

"I was welcomed by blinding snows and ocean gales, sleet and slush. Last night we had our opening service—largely attended and full of spiritual power. They sang old revival hymns and I almost fancied that I was at Bethlehem in Chesterfield. I am surely advertised and my grim picture frowns in windows and newspapers."

"I am yet in the grip of my cold" he writes "and my old voice rattled like a shuck in the wind".

Sunday was always a pivotal day with him in his meetings. Concerning his first Sunday in Boston he writes:

"This is Monday. My wretched old throat has played cruel pranks on me and I have fairly filled the Back Bay

Digitized by Google

country with my squeaks and shrieks but I am living yet and hope you are well.

"Things opened yesterday with majestic auspiciousness. Crowd big in the morning and far bigger at night. . . My dulness yesterday amounted to a crisis and yet the indications were fine.

"Later: Glorious Monday night meeting."

"At noon today" he writes his wife. "I am to preach to Union Conference of Boston Ministers—about five or six hundred of them, Henson says.

"Old acquaintances are floating up on the tide and I rejoice in them."

He writes me on the 11th:

"Our meeting is too good to despise and not great enough to satisfy. . . I am perpetually ashamed of myself and do nothing that satisfies me. I told them to discharge me any morning and it would be for the good of the Cause. But their kindness is past finding out. . . Some of the deacons are transportingly sympathetic. They come in their carriages to take me to the meetings, give me beautiful drives, anticipate all my wants and treat me far better than I am entitled to on the score of my merits.

"I was out at Newton [Seminary] yesterday, took lunch with the boys and gave them a talk. They were very demonstrative and I hope that some of the shot got under the skin.

"I have not preached well here and have felt the depression of it. My voice grew unmanageably bad and I have occasional solitudes under the juniper tree.

"I am much of my time alone at the hotel, too much I think and I spend too much in feeling ashamed of myself. We look for greater things tomorrow and next week.

"I am tortured with great desires and cheered with the hopes of yet better things."

The climax came at last, as is seen from his card written on Sunday afternoon:

"Immortally glorious times this morning! Dr. Henson says he has seen nothing like it before. Many conversions. Had two services—first, the sermon and then in Sunday School. Great crowds and grace abounding."

Digitized by Google

He wrote again:

"It was grace and glory combined this morning; like the break-up of an ice gorge. Many conversions and great crowds.

"*After night service*

"Terrible fire tonight and many Temple people burned out. But large crowd and great interest. It has been a blessed day."

The meeting moved to a rich conclusion. He wrote his wife on Wednesday, "Friends are preparing to give me a reception at noon. They are wonderfully fine folks and I am sure that it will be of the royal sort, but I would be glad to swap it for a handshake with a good game of quoits. This is written just as I am waiting for carriage to take me to church and in the wildest sort of haste."

He writes in the Argus the following breezy sketch:

"It touched me in a peculiarly sensitive point when Dr. P. S. Henson asked me to come to Boston and help him in a revival. You see he and I roved the same bridle ways of Chesterfield and Powhatan and other sections of Virginia in the callow days of—well, how long do you reckon it was ago? For Henson's sake I answer not. We had worked in harness on previous occasions and though possibly our muscles are not quite so flexible as they have been, I felt a purely human desire to feel the jerk of the traces again. Inasmuch as my ardent and distinguished friend, Deacon A. T. Eddy, of the Temple church backed up Henson, and said it was the thing to do, and as I have next to nothing to do except such things as other people tell me to do, I defied my inertia and went.

"When I stepped out of the train at the Boston station, I saw the scudding snow, the gleaming sleet and the slush abounding, and just about then I swallowed a section of east wind which ripped up my throat, went off with my voice and made me wonder whether it was ever thus. It was ever thus for three straight days and when I first opened my mouth on a Boston audience, the untraveled part of it wondered if all Southerners were croakers of the same sort.

"But some things in Boston are hot— jubilantly, livingly hot, one of which is a Tremont Temple welcome. Of course Hen-

Digitized by Google

son did his part—he had to whether he wished it or not, but here and now and before the unassembled earth I gratefully testify to the cordiality, brotherliness and superb "esprit de corps" of that imperial church. They were good to me at the start, good along the way and considerate, affectionate and ready for every good work to the moment of ending.

"The meeting commenced on April the 5th and ran until the night of April the 17th, and when it ceased to run, I had to run with might and main to catch a train for Hamilton, N. Y., the seat of Colgate University where I am to have the joy untellable of preaching the Gospel to the great assemblage of young people in that town."

With the echoes of his Boston experiences gladdening his heart he hurries away to Hamilton, New York, where he is destined to have one of the most powerful meetings of his life. At Hamilton was Colgate University, which included Colgate Theological Seminary. From Dr. Henson came the following letter:

"It is a delight to be in touch with you, whether near at hand, or far away, for you are a live wire with all the thrill and none of the shock. We missed you mightily when you were gone, but your "remains" are still with us and there is as much quickening power in them as there was in Elisha's bones. Long time will your messages wake the echoes in the Temple.

"With love that brightens with the years. in which the little woman joins and which includes not only you but yours,

"Henson."

Dr. Hatcher wrote in the Herald an article on Dr. Henson, that was dashed off in his sprightliest style. One paragraph of it reads as follows:

"We hate to say that Henson is popular. It is a hurtful thing to say against a respectable man, and we make haste to explain that he is fortunate enough not to be happy with everybody. To his credit, be it said, he has had his critics by the score and his detractors by the several scores. Henson is a most inconvenient man to hate. He is so mercurial, bouyant and self-reliant that he absolutely forgets his enemies—the

Digitized by Google

most unpitying cruelty which can be inflicted upon a gratuitous foe. Many have sought to lure Poindexter Smith to the dissecting room with a view to an operation, but ubiquitous as he is, Henson has never been willing to attend the ceremony."

In the meantime the day for the publication of his Jasper book is approaching and he is kept busy reading proof.

"Jasper proof blows in every day" he writes me from Hamilton, "and I am well advanced on it. . It would kill me to have 'De Sun do move' as the title of the book. It would outrage the spirit in which it is written, play on Jasper's weak point and be an unseemly bid for trade."

"As to the title let us try these and decide:

" 'Jasper, the Unmatched Genius of his Race.'
'John Jasper, the Master of his Masters.'
'John Jasper, the Peerless Son of Africa.'
'John Jasper, the Wizard of the Platform.'

"I would leave off the 'Rev.' from him and, for myself, I would like to be written thus:

'William E. Hatcher, LL. D.'

"We might get Henson of Tremont Temple, or Mullins, or Ex-Governor Montague, or Dr. Greene of Washington, to write an introduction.

"I would think that a few things as to my history ought to go in—just enough to put me in my proper place before the public. It needs to be only a few sentences in the introduction."

Again on the same date:

"I have written you once today and here I come again. I have almost decided to put the title of my book 'John Jasper', the Negro Orator of Fluvanna' and get Henson to write the foreword of the book. What do you think of it?

"Tell Anna 'Hello Anna,' grandfather wants to see her."

Night by night the meetings continued at Hamilton until the great climax came on Sunday May 3rd. That must indeed have been a day of Pentecostal glories.

Digitized by Google

"We had the greatest meeting last Sunday" he writes "that I ever saw in my life. Over a hundred conversions during the day, probably nine-tenths of whom were over seventeen years of age."

Even to this day they are talking in Hamilton about those wonderful meetings by Dr. Hatcher, and the influence of them have spread far and wide. Here is a letter from a young gentleman written five years after the meetings, and showing one of his methods of dealing with the students in the meeting:

"Dr. Hatcher longed to get into informal touch with the students so he whispered to one or two of the college men that he wished he might dine at some of the fraternities. I invited that old gentleman with white head to my chapter house for dinner. The boys wondered at such an act but their wonder was greater and different when he began to joke and tell stories and soon had them in a roar of laughter. After dinner he said, 'Don't you fellows sing?' About twenty-five of us gathered around the piano in the music room and for a half hour gladly entertained him with college and fraternity songs. He enjoyed it immensely. Suddenly he arose and said, 'Well, boys, I must go. Say, you've given me a fine time, and I actually feel indebted to you. Now I want to do something to reciprocate your kindness. I'm holding meetings every night in the Baptist Church down here and I just want you to come down and I'll try to give you fellows as good a time as you've given me. I'm preaching Jesus Christ and I'll guarantee you'll have a good time if you come. Well good-bye.' The boys went. They went in crowds and four of the young men from our own fraternity took a firm stand for Jesus Christ and the Christian life."

Dr. Masters writes in the Herald of a little incident in a Railroad Sleeper while he was enroute for Hot Springs, for the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in May:

"Then from across the aisle in berth number 2. came a call from Dr. Hatcher for the porter's assistance. I looked and the berth on which the Doctor had essayed to rest had collapsed for a foot in the middle, and he besought the porter to yank it up and prop it in a horizontal position. The Doctor declared

Digitized by Google

that the mattress was more than a foot shorter than the berth and had been pieced out by stuffed-in blankets. The upper section of the upholstered seat-back hung loose above his head and at each fresh lurch of the car would knock against his head. Next morning, when I asked how he felt, he said he had slept better in his time but was thankful to be living."

After attending the Commencement at Fork Union he dashed off to Chester, S. C., where he was engaged to hold revival meetings, and from which place he writes me:

"My anxious flight back to Virginia and the wear and tear of Commencement at Fork Union did me up quite tragically.

"I landed here after midnight on Saturday night feeling like a fugitive from injustice and unfit for anything. I almost imagine that people here suppose that they have sent the wrong man and are wondering what became of the man who promised to hold a meeting here.

"Fork Union is riding me hard. We have no Headmaster and, with the Catalogue, campaign and organization of Faculty and bothers of farming and my entangling engagements, I feel that this is a hard world to live in.

"If you are so hopelessly bad as not to be able to give your life to Fork Union—as I expect you are—then I pray you to tell me where to find a man . . . Tell William that he and the Lynchburg kids had better open the restaurant at Careby Hall about the first of June."

Colgate University sent him a gift,—a new title for his name as is seen from the following letter:

"COLGATE UNIVERSITY,
"HAMILTON, N. Y.

"REV. WILLIAM E. HATCHER, D. D., LL. D.,
"FORK UNION, VIRGINIA:

"MY DEAR DR. HATCHER,—It is the desire of the trustees and faculty of Colgate University to confer upon you at the next Commencement the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. I trust that it may be agreeable to you to receive the degree and shall be gratified to receive notice to that effect.

Digitized by Google

It would be very pleasant to us if you could be present on Commencement Day, June twenty-fifth to receive this degree in person.

"Sincerely Yours,
"H. N. Cranshaw,
"Acting President."

He picked his way over into the Northern Neck of Virginia for a church dedication on the first Sunday in June. Among the visitors present was Dr. V. I. Masters who thus writes:

"We shall never forget him as we saw him one Sunday night in early Summer in 1908 at the dedication of a little church made up largely of fisher folk, away over on the Northern Neck of Virginia on the shores of the Chesapeake. Coming unexpectedly into the thronged room with a ministerial friend, we found him sitting in the pulpit while the people gathered. Joy beamed from his fine attractive face and he was evidently happy. He espied us, and with a certain gladsome humor, that he indulged without ever sacrificing the essence of decorum, he marshaled us into the pulpit stand, which was already overflowing with flowers and preachers and proceeded with the service. This included a great sermon by Dr. Hatcher on Zaccheus, which was in its simplicity in perfect accord with the modes of thought of his hearers.

"To us that night in a little country church on the shores of the Chesapeake, remote from centers where men do much foregather and pass to and fro, Dr. Hatcher seemed as a loving father whose children were all members of the household of faith, or as a king who dignified the plain, diminutive platform into a throne by the sheer strength and worth of his personality."

Lynchburg was one of his frequent stopping places because it was there that his daughter Kate and two grandchildren, Virginia and Katherine lived, and in their home he found happy companionship and rest.

"I envy you the joy of being at Kate's" he wrote his wife a few weeks earlier in the Summer. "That is my delight—nothing on the earth more cheering and restful than Kate's ever cheering kindness."

Digitized by Google

From Lynchburg he writes me on June 19th concerning his sister:

"I have been to Bedford to bury aunt Margaret. It was a great occasion. Honors thick and rich attended her. It pulled me quite sharply to realize that only I, of all who once sat at my father's table, still survive. And yet, I cannot think of death without an abounding sense of cheerfulness and triumph.

"Now an item of business:

"We had a chapter on the Death and Funeral of Jasper but in some way that got left out. Mr. Revell writes me that they never received it. It is barely possible that it is mixed in the whirlwind of your glorious confusion. If it is'nt then Jasper will have to go to his crown without a funeral, though I know he had one, because I helped to preach it. I leave this afternoon for Bluefield."

Bluefield was a bustling city in the mountainous southwestern section of the state but it had a young pastor of whom he was greatly fond,—Rev. Harry W. Mabie.

In writing from Bluefield about his letter to Mr. F. H. Revell, the New York publisher of his Jasper book, he said among other things:

I told him also that those whom I had consulted thought that some of my titles ought to accompany my name. I told him that he could put LL. D. or L. H. D. or both, or neither, so far as Brer Hatcher cares about it."

Rev. A. W. Bealer writes him a cheering letter:

"I have just read an article of yours in the Herald and I remarked to my wife that nobody could tell a thing with as much originality as could William E. Hatcher and that it was as refreshing to the mind as a sea breeze is on a Summer day. I pray that the Lord will spare you long to bless us with your loving presence.

"Wont you send me one of your photographs? . . I want my boys to look upon the face of William E. Hatcher and perhaps in the years that are to come something of his spirit, if not of his mantle may fall upon them."

Digitized by Google

One of the chapters of his Jasper book,—the one telling of Jasper's conversion—had been already published in a booklet and Dr. Weston, President of Crozer Seminary, thus writes to him:

"DEAR DR. HATCHER,—I have just read,—for the I do not know how manyeth time,—your touching account of the conversion of Jasper. My tears flowed fast, as they always do when I read the story."

He then added that he wanted twenty copies to be distributed among ministerial friends.

From far away Seattle, in Washington state, came a letter from Dr. L. B. Whitman, pastor of the First Church of that city, and a former president of Columbian University:

"The news of your resignation as president of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College loosens a flood of tender memories in my life. I wonder if you have any idea how strong and beautiful and helpful your life is. We are all your debtors forever."

"The Associations are to open soon" he writes on July 6th "and as I have no one on earth to help me about the patronage of the Academy I will have to travel day and night."

"Think of it! Seventy five years old and yet scudding through the state, in sweltering weather and on all sorts of trains and conveyances, from Association to Association, sounding the Fork Union trumpet and seeking to corral boys for his beloved school.

"I find myself so utterly fagged out" he writes his wife on Aug. 6th "that I have decided to come to Fork Union Monday and rest. Say nothing about this but quietly send for me. I'll come up from Richmond on the morning train and lay up for repairs. Tell Mercer [stenographer] that I will need him at 2:30 P. M."

He was to "lay up for repairs" on that day and at 2:30 he wanted his stenographer. It was generally thus that his plans for rest worked out.

Digitized by Google

He carried at this time the entire responsibilities of the Academy and the load was heavy. As an example of his bothers was the following: A gentleman who had a boy at the academy had become very delinquent in the matter of paying for his boy and he had written this gentleman a strong letter urging a remittance. He replied to the request in an almost insulting tone and Dr. Hatcher wrote him a kind but firm letter in reply closing as follows:

"I treat you as a gentleman and a brother and there is no need for you to deal roughly with me. At any rate I think if you were going to abuse me, you ought to pay the bill first and then turn yourself loose on me if you must."

He supplied one Sunday at Eutaw Place during the Summer and in writing me how they treated him he said, "They ovated me to the spoiling point."

His Chinese boy "Ah Fong" spoke at both services on Sunday at the First Baptist Church in Richmond and Dr. George W. McDaniel, the pastor of the church and one of Dr. Hatcher's greatly beloved friends, thus writes Mrs. Hatcher:

"It would have overjoyed you, as it delighted me, to hear Ah Fong last night. They say he did even better in the morning. He spoke clearly and interestingly and the great congregation hung eagerly upon his words. The cash collection for him amounted to $52.62 and he embarrassed us by his gratitude. To know how he pleased our people will doubtless be some compensation to you and Dr. Hatcher for the efforts and sacrifices which you have made in his behalf. To have trained such a young man is an invaluable contribution to Christian civilization. Remember me affectionately to all your family."

In speaking one day before the Shiloh Association Dr. Hatcher said:

"I have found life beautiful and joyous. There is much that is good in this life. Still there are many reasons why I should not care to stay on here always . But there is one reason—only one why I should like to live on a good while longer.

Digitized by Google

The outlook for the Baptists is so bright, the possibilities easily within their reach so great I should like to live a good while longer just to see what the Baptists will accomplish. And who knows but that up yonder I shall walk out on the battlements of heaven and look down upon my brethren and rejoice with them in their achievements."

He was in a serious railroad accident while traveling from Newport News to Richmond. He had with him a lad whom he was taking to the Academy for the Preparatory Department. His vivid account of the wreck furnishes interesting reading and shows that his good sense and self-control did not desert him even in the hour of disaster:

"There was no warning of what was to be. It came in a second. A noise—such a clashing, roaring, confusing, grating, crashing noise it was—jarred the heavens, put the earth to shaking and spoke terror to the neighborhood. An old farmer was quietly feeding his horse in his stable off on his plantation and he was hit by that indescribable fury of hostile sounds and came flying like a hunted maniac to the scene. He said that he knew at once that it told of destruction and sorrow which called for help and he was there to do his part. As for myself,—Nil. I heard it, felt the shiver of it,—felt it as it swept every nerve and tissue of my being—felt its sting in the center of life and went sore from it for days—felt its jar worse than the harrowing terrors of the earthquake.

"First the splitting, deadly roar. Then the jerk of the train and the leap of the front end of my car from the track and its breaking crash into the car ahead.

"Then I knew what it was. So far as I recall there was no sense of fear but quick dread of mangling and wounds. But I knew no thought of escape; my life was bound up with the train. Where it went I must go; what befel it, was coming to me. The passengers bolted to the front to get out. I was swept on to the front by the rush, but the car was jammed into the other car and egress was shut off. I cared not, for in flight I saw no safety. My part was to wait. I peeped out of the window and I saw that we were on an embankment and had stopped.

"Meanwhile my little Norfolk "Prep" was brightening and blossoming into a hero. At the first clang of the shock he neatly inverted and landed on his head but he righted up in-

Digitized by Google

stantly and with rare self-forgetfulness though he had just come into my hands that morning, he seemed concerned only for me. He ran to the front to see if he could find a way for me to escape and, failing in that, he rushed to the rear to see what could be done in that direction and, unmindful of his own peril, dashed back and seizing my hand pressed me to come out. There was a touch of old time heroism in the lad's conduct which attracted admiring attention. As a fact I was not hurt except by the sickening jar at the first.

"The engineer was a martyr. He cut loose the train and went down with the engine to death. He only lost his life and all the passengers who suffered met their fate in needless efforts."

Regarding the above racking experience he writes:

"As I had been whirling up and down the earth for more than a half century on roads of various gauges and grades and in ever so many countries and had never had a serious shake-up, I would think it out of all grace and taste to raise a resentful complaint. We must take our good mixed with evil and on that point I bow the meek head."

He went in September to Saluda in S. C. and on his way had his valise stolen and he writes; "With it went nearly all my faded finery. But we need not mourn departed clothes. I am delightfully situated and am determined to be lazy even if I have to work to get the privilege." To his friend Rev. R. H. Winfree he writes:

"My increasing age makes me more dependent and my soul cries out for you. I must stick to you and you to me until my call comes. Your success as a pastor is my joy, and I am somewhat impressed with the thought that you are to live and die in Chesterfield, but God must settle that."

It was at this time that his book "John Jasper" made its appearance before the public. Its reception in many cases was enthusiastic. The Washington Post in a lengthy editorial upon it said:

"It has remained for the kindly hand of Dr. Hatcher, Virginia's veteran Baptist divine, to present to posterity a fragment

Digitized by Google

of one of the purest specimens of genius that ever came out of the institution of slavery."

The book preserves a chapter out of southern life that is rapidly passing away. Jasper was a negro preacher of Richmond, Va., was not only the author of the sermon "De Sun do move" but the ministerial sensation of the city, a man of remarkable personality and above all a preacher of overmastering eloquence. Dr. Hatcher tells in the beginning of the book how he came to "be mixed up with Jasper":

"The writer of this book heard that there was a marvel of a man 'over in Africa',—a not too savory portion of Richmond Virginia—and one Sunday afternoon in company with a Scotch-Irishman, who was a scholar and critic with a strong leaning towards ridicule, he went to hear him preach. Shades of our Anglo-Saxon fathers! Did mortal lips ever gush with such torrents of horrible English! Hardly a word came out clothed and in its right mind. And gestures! He circled around the pulpit with his ankle in his hand, and laughed and sang and shouted and acted about a dozen characters within the space of three minutes.

"Meanwhile, in spite of these things, he was pouring out a gospel sermon, red-hot, full of love, full of invective, full of tenderness, full of bitterness, full of tears, full of every passion that ever flamed in the human breast.

"He was a theatre in himself with the stage crowded with actors. He was a battle field;—himself the general, the staff, the officers, the common soldiery, the thundering artillery and the rattling musketry. He was the preacher; likewise the church and the choir and the deacons and the congregation."

He then tells how he went again to hear him and "kept going, off and on for about twenty years."

"When this man died" he writes "it was as the fall of a tower. It was a crash, heard and felt farther than was the collapse of the famous tower of Venice."

Another such character as Jasper will hardly ever appear again. This book however has embalmed the spirit and elo-

Digitized by Google

quence of this African prodigy for future generations to enjoy. The New York Times in an article, of more than a column in length, said that Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page had made the old plantation darkey, with his dialect and quaint humor, a familiar figure and that their writings were destined to immortality, but that John Jasper was more than a plantation darkey with his fiddle or his hoe; he was a preacher of transcendent eloquence and a personality that inspired wonder and for such a character,—with his pulpit dialect,—to be enshrined in literature was an event of surpassing interest.

"In Dr. Hatcher's sketch of John Jasper" says the Times one has a glimpse of an actual character than which there are few more deliciously humorous, more naively primitive, more original in the pages of fiction. Jasper was one of the most unique preachers—black or white—who ever filled a pulpit or swayed with his eloquence, acrobatic quite as often as vocal, the throngs that came to hear him."

"As one reads the book" says the Central Baptist "he can hardly refrain from the feeling that the author is inspired."

But let us open the book and note some of its features. Near the beginning it tells of Jasper's remarkable conversion and call to the ministry. "I was seekin' God six long weeks" says Jasper—"jes" 'cause I was sich a fool I couldn't see de way". The author then relates how Jasper, who was a "stemmer" in Mr. Samuel Hargrove's tobacco factory, was converted one morning while at work in the factory. "Fore I kno'd it de light broke; I was light as a feather; my feet was on de mount'n; salvation rol'd like a flood thru my soul an' I felt as if I could 'nock off de fact'ry roof wid my shouts."

But Jasper knew that he must create no disturbance in the factory and so he simply slipped up to one or two of the other darkies and whispered, "Hallelujah, my soul is redeemed". "But jes den" says Jasper "de holin back straps of Jasper's breachin broke and what I thought would be a whisper was

Digitized by Google

loud enuf to be hearn clean 'cross Jeems River to Manchester." The result was that the overseer in the factory hearing the uproar in the room entered in indignant rage and in a very short while Jasper was ordered to report to Mr. Hargrove's office. He was a warm hearted christian man and soon John came in and was asked concerning "the noise in the stemming room." Jasper thus tells of his visit that day to Mr. Hargrove's office: He said to his employer:

" 'Mars Sam ever sence de fourth of July I ben cryin' after de Lord, six long weeks, an' jes' now out dar at de table God tuk my sins away an' set my feet on a rock. I didn't mean to make no noise, Mars Sam, but 'fore I know'd it de fires broke out in my soul an' I jes' let go one shout to de glory of my Savior.

"Mars Sam was settin' wid his eyes a little down to de flo', an' wid a pritty quiv'r in his voice he say very slo';—'John, I b'leve dat way myself. I luv de Savior dat you have jes' foun' an' I wan' to tell you dat I do'n complain 'cause you made de noise jes' now as you did,'

"Den Mars Sam did er thing dat nearly made me drop to de flo'. He git out of his chair an' walk over to me an' giv' me his han' an' he say: 'John I wish you mighty well. Your Savior is mine an' we are bruthers in de Lord.' When he say dat, I turn 'roun an' put my arm agin de wall an' held me mouf to keep from shoutin'. Mars Sam will nev'r kno de good he dun me.

"Arter awhile he say: 'John, did you tell eny of 'em dar 'bout your conversion?' and I say: 'Yes, Mars Sam, I tell 'em fore I kno'd it, an' I feel like tellin' eberybody in de worl' bout it.'

"Den he say: 'John, you may tell it. Go back in dar an' go up an' down de tables, an' tell all of 'em. An' den if you wan' to go up stairs an' tell de hogshead men an' de drivers an' eberybody what de Lord has dun for you."

"By dis time Mars Sam's face was rainin' tears an' he say: 'John you needn' work no mo' today. I giv you holiday. Aft'r you git thru tellin' it here at de fact'ry go up to de housė an' tell your folks; go roun' to your neighbors an' tell dem; go enywhere you wan' to an' tell de good news. It'll do you good, do dem good an' help to honor your Lord an' Savior."

Digitized by Google

"Oh, dat happy day! Can I ever forgit it? Dat was my conversion mornin' an' dat day de Lord sent me out wid de good news of de kingdom. For mo' den forty years I've ben tellin' de story. My step is gittin' ruther slo', my voice breaks down an' sometimes I am awful tired, but still I'm tellin' it. My lips shall proclaim de dyin' luv of de Lam' wid my las' expirin breath.

"Ah, my dear ol' marster. He sleeps out yonder in de ol' cemetery an' in dis worl' I shall see his face no mo' but I don't forgit him. He give me a holiday an' sent me out to tell my friends what gret things God had dun for my soul. Oft'n as I preach I feel dat I'm doin' what my ol' marster tol' me to do."

One of the chapters in the book is entitled "Jasper's Star Witness". Her name was Virginia Adams one of his members, who had many interesting things to tell about her old pastor. She said:

"No, Brer Jasper wuz no money-grabber. When de church wuz weak an' cudn't raze much money, he never sot no salary. Yer cudn't git him ter do it. He tell 'em not ter trubble 'emselves but jes' giv him wat dey chuze ter put in de baskit and he nevur made no complaint. Wen de church got richer dey crowd him hard ter kno' how much he wantid and he at las' tell 'em dat he wud take $62.50 a month and dat he didn't want no more dan dat. Wen de gret crowds got ter kummin and de white folks too, and de money po'ed in so fas' de bruthерin, farly quarl'd wid him ter git his sal'ry raz'd but he say 'No. I git nuff now, and I want no more. I'm not here to gouge my people out of es much money es I kin.' He say he got nuff money to pay his taxes and buy wat he needed and if dey got more dan dey wantid let 'em take it and help de Lord's pore."

One of his most eloquent outbursts was his sermon on Heaven. The sermon did not have Heaven as its theme; it was a funeral discourse on William Ellyson and Mary Barnes. He first informed the congregation that "Wilyum Ellersin" did not live right and that he was not going to lie about it. "Ef you wants folks who live wrong ter be preached and sung to glory w'en dey die" said he "don' bring 'em to Jasper."

Digitized by Google

"But my bruthrin" he said in happy tone "Mary Barnes wus diffrunt."

Thus Jasper began with the departed sister and, as he proceeded, his heart took fire and he carried his hearers up to Heaven and began a circuit of the celestial city to look upon its beauties.

"Fust of all I'd go down an see de river of life. I lov's to go down to de ole muddy Jeemes—mighty red an' muddy, but it goes 'long so gran' an' quiet, like 'twas 'tendin' to business—but dat ain't nothin' to de river which flows by de throne. I longs fer its crystal waves, an' de trees on de banks an' de all-mann'rs of fruits. Dis old head of mine oft'n gits hot with fever, aches all night an' rolls on de piller, an' I has many times desired to cool it in that blessed stream as it kisses de banks of dat upper Canaan. Blessed be de Lord. De thought of seein' dat river, drinkin' its water an' restin' und'r dose trees—"Then suddenly" says Dr. Hatcher "Jasper began to intone a chorus in a most affecting way no part of which I can recall except the last line; "Oh what mus' it be to be thar."

Jasper then starts out to view the city's streets and mansions and soon to his overmastering delight he discovers his own mansion. He next "moved off to see the angelic host" on the "white plains of the heavenly Canaan."

The chapter thus continues:

" 'An' now frenz' he said still panting and seeking to be calm 'ef yer'll 'scuse me, I'll take er trip to de throne an' see de King in 'is roya'l garmints'. It was an event to study him at this point. His earnestness and reverence passed all speech and grew as he went. The light from the throne dazzled him from afar. There was the great white throne—there the elders bowing in adoring wonder—the archangels waiting in silence for the commands of the King—there, in hosts innumerable, were the ransomed. In point of vivid description it surpassed all I had heard or read. By this time the old negro orator seemed glorified.

"Earth could hardly hold him. He sprang about the platform with a boy's alertness; he was unconsciously waving his handkerchief as if greeting a conqueror; his face was streaming

Digitized by Google

with tears; he was bowing before the Redeemer; he was clapping his hands, laughing, shouting and wiping the blinding tears out of his eyes. It was a moment of transport and unmatched wonder to every one and I felt as if it could never cease when suddenly in a new note he broke into his chorus, ending with the soul melting words; 'Oh, what mus' it be to be thar."

Finally he visits the ransomed 'of de Lord' and walks up the line speaking to the different ones among the glorified. The account thus continues:

"Thus he went on greeting patriarchs, prophets, apostles martyrs, his brethren and loved ones gone before, until suddenly he sprang back and raised a shout that fairly shook the roof: 'Here she is! I ———— know'd sh'd git here! why Mary Barnes, got home did yer?'

"A great handshake he gave her and for a moment it looked as if the newly glorified Mary Barnes was the center of Jasper's thoughts; but, as if by magic, things again changed and he was, singing at the top of his voice the chorus which died away, amid the shrieks and shouts of his crowd, with his plaintive note, 'Oh what mus' it be to be thar!' "

The book closes with these words, "Valiant heroic old man. He stood in his place and was not afraid."

Concerning the death of Jasper, Dr. Hatcher thus writes in the Argus:

"The death of Jasper shook Richomond. . . It was bruited about in advance that he was out of kelter. . . . When he could no longer mount his pulpit and sound the gospel trumpet, his light went out. . . When he emerged neat and trim on Sunday. . . he was happy as a school boy on vacation morning as he came to meet his people!

"The cracking of his trumpet—that trumpet which Mars' Sam Hargrove put in his hands on a far-away July morning in the old tobacco factory, and which he had blown with intoxicating joy for a half-century, broke his spirit and life could hold him little longer."

The publisher says that the book at this late day still maintains its steady sale. It seems to touch certain chords common

Digitized by Google

to all classes and professions, by giving the reader what the author had promised himself to give,—"a dash of the genuine Jasper". He flashes light upon the unique personality so that the reader can see him as he was? One of the chapters is entitled "Jasper glimpsed under various lights" and when the author gets through with this African wonder there is little in his make-up that has not been unveiled before the reader.

Let it be remembered that the chapters of the book were dashed off at odd hours, in various places and in the midst of a ceaseless whirl of travel and work, and while the volume is a high tribute to the genius of Jasper, it also reflects one of the traits of the author, and that was his ability to discover a great soul, even when housed in a black body. Jasper's sermon on "De Sun do move" gave him world-wide notoriety and yet it thereby made him the butt of many a jest. Dr. Hatcher said that that sermon exhibited him at his weakest point. But underneath Jasper's eccentricities and oddities Dr. Hatcher saw a jewel of purest ray and he picked it up, rubbed off the dirt and held it for the world's gaze and verily there are those who say that the light will never go out.

If I were asked to name one of the deepest roots in Dr. Hatcher's character,—the root that went the furthest down and out of which came the richest fruitage I would be tempted to say it was his ability to see what was in men,—especially the good and beautiful that was in them—and to bring it to light.

He said one day of a certain prominent Baptist minister who was usually a man of courtly bearing but carried within him a bundle of irascible possibilities, "Dr. ———— is a gentleman up to a certain temperature." He understood the Doctor well; he had many pleasant dealings with him but he always kept one eye on the thermometer.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XL

1908—1909

WITH THE ACADEMY BOYS. THE ACADEMY AND THE COMMUNITY. CHARACTER TRAINING. "GRACE-STREET" ANNIVERSARY. REMINISICENCES. MANIFOLD TRIPS AND LABORS. AH FONG'S GRADUATION. MONUMENTS. A PERSONAL SERMON. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

If we would obtain a full sized picture of him we must catch sight of him in his dealings with the Academy boys. Some of his finer traits were exhibited in his contact with them. When he came to Careby from his meetings and other campaigns of heavy labor he came not to seek the rest and quiet in the bosom of his home, but rather to find himself attacked by cares and problems innumerable, but he found himself also surrounded by brigades of boys and he was then in his happiest mood. His keen eye saw what was in them and oft times he would answer a boy with a remark that would stick in his memory and burn like fire in his soul. Those eager, restless ambitious young fellows surging around him, as he came upon the campus, enthusiastically applauding him —*as they always did whenever he came in to the Academy chapel*,—knocking at his Careby Hall door at all hours of the day, and often of the night, looking or speaking their appreciation of his kindness, or bombarding him with their questions, and drinking in his counsels;—that was the fountain from which he drew rich draughts of delight.

He was never too busy to talk with a boy. His wife says that one day he found himself crowded with work in his study

Digitized by Google

and he gave order that he must not be interrupted for anything. People of all ages and conditions were visitors at Careby. Teachers, or neighbors, or persons from a distance would, upon hearing that Dr. Hatcher had returned, for some reason "want to see Dr. Hatcher". But on the day in question the edict went forth—"No interruption," and so during the hours of the morning his request was scrupulously observed. In the course of the day, however, a little fellow—one of the boys of the neighborhood—in some way passed through the outer sentinels, entered the front door and pounded on Dr. Hatcher's door. As no one else replied, Dr. Hatcher opened the door and his wife heard him call, "Hello, Guy; Come right in". His wife said that from the greeting given the boy one would have almost imagined he was greeting some distinguished visitor, and after his serious insistence regarding interruptions that day she was highly amused at the royal welcome he gave the boy. He said that when he was a mountain boy scarcely anybody in his community ever thought a boy worthy of any consideration, and when on rare occasions some one took special notice of him it was an epoch in his life. No reward for his kindness was so sweet and inspiring to him as the grateful light in the face of a boy.

The above occurence reminds us of an incident in the life of that great lover of children, Francis Xavier, the missionary:

"Once on some field of labor where hundreds came with their needs, their questions and their heart hungers, he was worn almost to utter exhaustion by days and nights of serving. At last he said to his attendant, 'I must sleep! I must sleep! If I do not I shall die. If any one comes—whoever comes—waken me not. I must sleep! He then retired into his tent, and his faithful servant began his watch. It was not long, however, till a pallid face appeared at the top. Xavier beckoned eagerly to the watcher and said in a solemn tone, 'I made a mistake. If a little child comes, waken me.' "

"The first time I ever saw Dr. Hatcher", says Rev. Dr. C. H. Dodd, "he was in an attitude which exactly and lastingly depicted the man I afterwards found him to be. He was

Digitized by Google

standing in the street, waiting for a car, and some little children who knew him, a little boy and girl, had crept up under his arms and were embracing him with intense affection. Big and friendly he towered there over those little children, in his true character—more as the shepherd than the bishop of their souls. He pictured his own secret in that fatherly posture as he let the little children come to him. And he was following Christ, too."

Rev. F. H. Jones says that when Dr. Hatcher was laboring for Richmond college and had his office at the College that he was a student in the institution and that one day, feeling a little worried as to his plans for the future, he said: "I believe I will go down and talk with Dr. Hatcher."

"I knocked at his door" said Mr. Jones "and I can hear his voice now as he shouted from within: 'Come in'. I opened the door, but saw his table piled with papers and so I said: 'No, doctor, you are busy, I will come in some other time.'

" 'Come right in, I'm never too busy to talk to a boy. Come here and tell me about yourself,' he said.

"I told him what I would like to accomplish at College, but said that I did not know whether I could or not, and he promptly and sympathetically said: 'Yes, you can and you can do even a great deal more' and by his kindly talk he put a new hope in my heart."

He sought to develope in the Fork Union community a spirit of helpfulness towards the Academy students. The following letter is a sample of many such letters written by him. It shows into what details his crowded mind would go in his sympathy for the needy boys:

"Fork Union Oct 26, 1908.

"My Dear Bro,:—"I thought I had written you again; we are very much set on having you come. If you and your father can raise forty-five ($45) I think that, if you will come and learn to press the uniforms for the boys at odd hours, you can make enough to get along. It is easy to learn and we have a friend here that can teach you. It is thoroughly respectable at our school for boys to work. They milk cows, cut wood, feed horses, act as barbers or do anything else they can to get

Digitized by Google

money to help them along. The Lord helps those who try to help themselves. If you come you had better come at once. You may have a hard scratch at first but do not mind that. If you wait you may lose the job of which I have spoken. I suggest that you write to my daughter Miss Elizabeth at this place and let us know at once what you intend to do. Come trusting in God. Bring a letter of commendation from your pastor or your church or both.

"Your sincere friend,
"Wm. E. Hatcher."

The regnant principle of the Academy was to help the fellow at the bottom. He had nearly all of the families in or around Fork Union taking boys into their homes, giving them little chores to do and also giving them their board—in whole or in part—in return.

"Fork Union" said he "has a way of finding gifted and aspiring boys and helping them to get their education,—those of them at least which need help. This constitutes one feature of the school in which my heart is most deeply interested. It has come to pass that Fork Union is known to be a place where bright and clever boys love to come because it is known that we try to make it easier for those who have nothing and nobody to help them in starting."

He was ever seeking to instill into the community the idea that the Academy was not there as a gold mine for Fork Union but rather as an opportunity for Fork Union to help struggling boys. Sometimes he would create positions in the Academy for the boys—which would mean no income, or very little, for the Academy, but simply an opportunity for the youth to help "work his way through."

Be it said for the Fork Union people that they responded to his appeals with gratifying and, in some cases, with beautiful generosity. He writes to a Virginia pastor in whose church was a boy who had gotten hold of his heart:

"My Dear Bro,—Unless I am mistaken I saw that boy and had some talk with him at ————. There is nothing

Digitized by Google

more sacred on earth than a young man's desire to qualify and equip himself for high usefulness in this world."

He next offered to make large reduction for tuition for the boy and then adds:

"May I ask also if the family during the session,—by his father giving some, and his brother some and his sisters some and, F———— possibly a little; and the mother stinting the family a little on butter and fowls and fruits and vegetables, turning the same into money,—could not help some in raising the $50,00.

"I charge you as this boy's pastor to take this work up and see it through to a righteous conclusion. What is done ought to be done now. See the family, fight it to a finish and report results at once. I cannot hold the place for work but a few days, but I will hold it while you work on the case, and work day and night until the thing is done. It is worth doing and it will be to your honor and to the glory of God to do it. And if you do not do it, I will blame you and think you are not as good a pastor as you ought to be. You know how I love you and how I trust you and rejoice with you in your ministerial work."

"Add up in dollars and cents" says Dr. Landrum "the total of his direct and indirect contributions to education, and many a philanthropic millionaire will have to look to his laurels. Estimate the nature and value of the services he has rendered vicariously to his God and country, and scholars and statesmen may well accord him fellowship in the temple of fame. So long as it is incumbent on some enterprising detective of worthfulness in citizenship to "write up" *"who's who"* in America, he will be derelict in duty if he leaves out the name of William E. Hatcher."

He loved to try his hand on the incorrigibles,—the boys whom others had despaired of. Often have I seen him in his office at Careby Hall take in hand a boy who had, from discouragement, or cowardice, decided to quit school,—a boy who had become refractory and reckless,—and by his direct, pungent talk to the boy,—talk that was frequently interspersed with gleams of humor—seek to shake and jostle him into a new

Digitized by Google

spirit and a high ambition. He would point out to the boy the two roads before him and challenge him to make his choice. A favorite sentence with him was, "We will try to make a man of him" and I have often heard him say to a boy, "Stand your ground and we will make a man of you".

He was interested in all the pursuits and games of the students. He wanted them to tell him all about themselves. It was entertaining to hear him when he and one or more boys were engaged in a free and easy conversation. The boys would do most of the talking,—mostly in reply to his questions and it was striking how his questions and his attitude towards them would put them on their mettle. He was a boy among boys. Dr. Perryman of Norfolk, in whose home Dr. Hatcher was entertained during a meeting of the General Association, said that his boy—about ten or twelve years of age— and Dr. Hatcher were walking along the street one morning in front of their house when he remarked to his wife, "Just look yonder at those two boys talking to each other; and look at George, he is talking to Dr. Hatcher as if Dr. Hatcher was nothing more than a boy, like himself."

He loved to be on the athletic field at Fork Union when base ball and foot ball games were played and none of the spectators were more enthusiastically interested than he. He preached the 225th anniversary sermon for the First Baptist Church in Charleston, S. C., and afterwards said, "I write that Sunday as among the high days of my ministerial life." He attended the General Association in November and Dr. Masters draws the following picture of him in a group of preachers one night during the meetings:

"In the pastor's study on Saturday night, after he had rendered brilliant service in introducing the new pastors, Dr. Hatcher chatted easily with several who gathered about him about a sermon which he is making. It is to be on Barnabas, the son of consolation, the man who saw good in people and brought it out. He developed a brief sketch of Barnabas as it was brought out in his recorded relations with others and

Digitized by Google

it fairly sparkled with pith and point. Dr. Hatcher ought to send that sermon to the Herald."

It is interesting to know that the last sermon he ever preached—a few days before his end—was on "Barnabas".

"FORK UNION, Oct. 29, 1908.

"MY DEAR E,—I am a little frazzled out by a few dozen bothers of domestic, Academic and other sorts. I am writing to you principally because I do not feel like it. But I had a royal week with Shipman at Rice's Depot last week [in meetings]. . . . I am again on the S. S. Lessons for next year. They bother me but I get tons of good out of them."

"Yours, Wm. E. H."

From Upperville he writes:

"Careby is the only place that has a suggestion of home to me and I love it very much. But the Academy absorbs almost every moment when I go there. I hope I can throw more of the burden on others."

He had a unique experience at his old Grace Street church in November. The church celebrated its seventy fifth Anniversary and had asked him to speak at that service on his "Recollections" of his pastorate. It was a memorable occasion. The General Association had just closed its sessions and many of its delegates lingered until the Grace Street Anniversary. His wife writes: "it was probably the greatest occasion of his life."

To Orie and Edith she writes:

"Oh such a meeting we had with every seat taken—1500 people at least.

"Your father was at his best except in voice. He had been coughing all day but did not cough any while speaking. Of course he swayed his audience with tears and laughter. . . . He spoke for an hour and the audience came enmasse to shake hands afterwards. It must have been an ovation very pleasing to his heart."

Digitized by Google

The striking feature of the service is yet to be mentioned. As he began to gather up his "recollections" of his pastorate at once the factional troubles that had harassed his pastorate for ten years loomed up in the list of his "recollections." He went to the gentleman who had been the leader of the faction and said "Brother X———— they have asked me to give my recollections of my pastorate at the Grace Street Anniversary and to do this I must narrate some disagreeable things about you; I tell you now so that you can be there."

The night with its crowd arrived and there on the pulpit sat this brother. Dr. Hatcher moved forward with his address taking up the story of his twenty-six years pastorate at the beginning and following it to the end. As a part of the story he described the opposition that met him near the beginning and followed him for many years and then he brought his narrative to a climax by saying:

"Those were pregnant and stressful days in my existence. The plowshare was in my soul for a decade and life hung trembling on the verge of a tragedy. There were men who gave me trouble and there sits near me now the chieftain of that wasting strife. I could not give my recollections without saying to you before him and before this great multitude that he was to me a trial long drawn out and yet, as I weigh the past, I do not believe that I ever lost my respect for him, though I may have mislaid it more than once and I am sure I did not lose absolutely my faith in his christian character though it shook many a time, and times upon times I told the Lord that if he did not prop it up it would inevitably break into hopeless ruin. After the end came I told him I had gone through my heart, searching every corner and crevice, and that I found nothing that would interfere with our fullest fellowship and our freest cooperation in all good works, and I can say to him today, after the years have lapsed away, that I cherish for him genuinely brotherly love and account him among that circle of friends whom I can trust without a misgiving. I hold up my right hand before him declaring that in its grasp there is friendship and brotherhood untainted by one unhappy memory."

As he said this the gentleman "sprang to his feet, walked forward and exchanged with the speaker a cordial hand grasp.

Digitized by Google

It was an episode that will constitute a part of the permanent history of that church." It was a dramatic scene. He was publicly digging up old clashes and strifes and under careless handling he might have precipitated a disturbance there upon the platform. They grasped each other's hands that night in mutual esteem and honor which continued unabated to the end of their lives.

When asked whether Dr. D——— would be a good man for a certain Louisville church to call he said, "He is good enough for Louisville and Louisville is good enough for him, but I am not sure that they are good enough for each other." In referring to Dr. Hatcher a prominent minister of Richmond wrote on Dec., 4th, "I know of no one to whom I can go whose counsel would have so much weight with me in rendering an important decision." And here before me is a letter from Dr. A. B. Rudd saying "Dr. Hatcher helped me to decide a great life question". In the midst of his goings he had his lights and shadows. He writes from Fork Union, "My health is not as good as usual. In fact I have almost concluded that it is not likely that it will be so good as it has been. I am nervous and full of pains in one way and another."

But with this plaintive note comes another in brighter tone, "My visit to Shenandoah is a new and lustrous page in my life and I shall read it over many a time in this world and, yet more times, I hope, in the other world."

The view we get of him shows him busy with his next book,—a book of his reminiscences—at our Baltimore home, while he is engaged in revival meetings at the Eutaw Place Church. He writes:

"Eldridge is helping me masterfully on my second book—that which meddles with my recollections. As a fact I rather shudder at the thought of embalming my reminiscences. They have a nice look and a fair light for me, but to be putting them in a book and hawking them on to the book-stalls and making a thing of commerce with them inclines me to take to the tall timbers.

Digitized by Google

"But I am committed to Revell and believe that we already have about enough material to make a good sized book,—such as it will be. I leave here Monday."

He went next to Franklin, Indiana, for meetings but not until he had paid a visit to Fork Union. He writes:

"I had a careworn time at Careby. The Academy throws its bitter waters in my face. But I get good out of it. New students come in rather thick and I pick up many crumbs of comfort as I march on. Sweet memories of your home are still weighing me down with burdens of joy."

A few weeks later he writes me again:

"Academy affairs are not running well. The only successful work that they seem to carry on is the harrowing up of my old soul with constant anxieties. . . . But you know that I never feel well, nor am quite happy, if things go too well with me. Things have to get crossed in order to make me go straight."

At Franklin the "Reminiscences" still weighed upon his mind. He writes to his daughter Orie:

"I feel rather ashamed of myself that my memory has waked up and assumed such haughty airs. I fear that what little productive power I may have, and also my energetic grasp on the future, may go to smash in the almost gleeful eagerness with which my memory is spurting up and down the past and lugging in all sorts of reminiscences.

"I give some time every day to my book and hope that it will not be long before I have material enough to feed it to the printer."

He wrote to another person that in "pegging away on his Reminiscences" he felt like "an egotistical fiend."

From Franklin he went to Fort Wayne in the same state (Indiana), where, in addition to his revival meetings, he delivered an address on John Jasper.

"The ministers were so stirred up and talked so much about it" said Dr. Vichert "that there was a demand by the public

Digitized by Google

for the same address and he repeated it in my church on the afternoon of Feb. 21st when the large auditorium was filled and those who came were inspired and delighted as the ministers had been."

He stopped in Louisville for a lecture at the Seminary. He wrote me, "I selected as my theme 'The Preacher and his Purse' and I had it in right good shape. They ripped up the smaller hills about it and requested it for publication."

He writes to his daughter Edith who was studying music in New York:

"You were quite pretty and interesting as I remember you before we forgot each other. I admire you most of all my children because we resemble each other the most at least in the respect that we are too busy to write to each other."

On his return to Fork Union after his long absence he found the usual crop of Academy bothers lined up and waiting for him. "We have Trustee meeting on Thursday" he writes from Fork Union "and we have problems of elephantine proportions on hand." After the meeting he writes:

"We had a high time at our Trustee meeting. ——— heard it thunder and perhaps are now looking for the lightning to strike."

His next jump was to Edgefield, S. C. where he held revival meetings, with his daily schedule as follows:

"Men's Prayer Meeting at 8:30 A. M.
Service at the Academy at 11 A. M.
Service at 4 P. M.
Service at night,"

A full programme was this for one who was approaching his 75th birthday.

The Edgefield Chronicle says "He is a grey-haired man—grey with the brave fight and long campaign of seventy-five years. As we listened to him preach on Sunday morning, we

Digitized by Google

thought of how, when he went home to heaven all the "ransomed throng" would hasten to welcome him. God bless him and his work! And may he stay with us to the last moment of his available time!"

Blessed experiences were his in the meetings during the winter in South Carolina. The Editor of the Christian Index in Georgia published the following:

"What a glorious thing it is for a man, far advanced in years, to be rendering such service to the glory of the Lord as Dr. William E. Hatcher is doing. Every now and then we see in the papers accounts of gracious and blessed meetings in which he is assisting pastors. He is verily bringing forth fruit in his old age, and fruit of the richest and finest quality. May the Lord spare him yet many years with his powers unimpaired for this kind of service."

In May he attended the Southern Baptist Convention where the denominational agencies piled their burdens upon him. "All present remember" said Dr. Jeffries "what a power he was before the Louisville Convention in helping to secure the splendid subscription [for the Seminary] which gave impulse and assurance to the movement. He was then a man of 74 years."

Back to Fork Union he hurried and from there he went again to South Carolina for meetings at Bennettsville and Batesville. We restrain our pen from telling of the glories of these meetings and hurry with him back to Virginia to an all-day meeting at "dear old Bethlehem" church in Chesterfield. To see him in one of his best roles we must view him at an all day meeting in the country. The above church was the same church at which he had held the wonderful meeting of many years ago. He preached in the morning, but it was in the afternoon that the unique service was held. It was a memorial service in memory of certain honored members who had passed to their heavenly reward. His letter to me tells the story:

"My day at Bethlehem was phenomenal, incomparable and next to miraculous. The crowd was great and a number

Digitized by Google

of the brethren, like Cary Winston, Bob Wood, and Jeff Brown, made a vast splutteration over my sermon. It showed their goodness, but not their capacity for criticism.

"The Memorial Services came in the afternoon and they were about as unlike a funeral as a moving picture show. I began with old Mr. McTyre, Isaac Winston and Miss Sallie. I told all the humorous and comical things except the story of the gray mare. I mentioned a multitude of the members, gave 'old man Lybarger [one of the members] and the oats' story and his conversion and closed with old Mr. Orrell and the Laprade boy. The feeling towards the close was electric and powerful and, while singing the last hymn, I invited confessions of faith and there were four. They are wearying me out to hold a meeting. How would you like to do it?

"Already Bethel is asking for a memorial day and the rest of them have suddenly waked up to feel that I ought to hold their protracted meetings for them. Invitations come in from every direction.

"I go to Christiansburg for a dedication Sunday and I believe I have eight dedications to follow."

He writes to his daughter, Orie, who is visiting in Bedford near his glorious old mountain "the Peaks":

"My Dear Orie,—"If you see your cousin Johnnie be sure to fall in love with him and his wife and ask him if he has'nt got a grandson that would make a first class man. If he thinks that he has a boy of that description, he must make it the joy of his advancing years to educate him, and I would be glad to get hold of him while he is young and tender. I hear that his daughter has very delightful and promising children. Give my love to the entire Peak tribe.

"I hope you will fatten a pound a day while you are gone and stay fifteen days.

"I came from Richmond yesterday and found my work piled a good deal higher than nature did her job when she piled the peaks of Otter."

His mail, month by month, gleamed with such bright and kindly messages as the following:

From Dr. C. H. Ryland:

"My Dear William E:—"I have come to rejoice in your going forth although I am not free from anxiety about the

Digitized by Google

strenuous way in which you are conducting your campaigns. The Psalmist said, 'I am a wonder to many' and you are a wonder to me."

From Dr. J. M. Frost:

"I congratulate you . . . on the great and glorious record you have made for yourself. Very few men have stamped themselves more deeply, or for better purpose, on their day and generation than you have done."

Judge Haralson, in a love letter to him, writes,"I wish my title to an eternal inheritance were as clear as yours."

An interesting incident occured in connection with the graduation of his Chinese boy, Ah Fong, at the Commencement exercises at Richmond College in June. He made a public address to this Chinese lad who thus describes the event:

"When I took my B. A. degree Dr. Hatcher presented me with a gold ring which I value it above all other things because in it was his love to me. In presenting the ring he made a speech. I do not remember the wording of that speech but the contents of it I still remember. He told how he met me, why he took me into his home. Since I have become a member of his family he had no occasion to complain against me. There was not one discord between us, he said. He painted my behavior so good that it makes me blush to think of it even now. He told my record at the schools. How an untutored lad I was when I first entered his home—took away some honor from Fork Union Academy. And graduated there and now takes away an honor from Richmond College. That he present the ring to me because of his warm love for me.

"On several occasions he asked me what I would do when I finished my education in America. Then he would say; 'I don't know what you ought to do, only the Lord knows. Remember one thing; you ought always to be useful to the world.' I remember very distinctly one Saturday afternoon as I was driving him to Bremo Station to catch the up-train to Lynchburg. It was in the Summer of 1909 after I had taken my B. A. at Richmond College. I had not decided where to go the next school term. He said to me, 'Ah Fong what do you want to make of yourself?' I mentioned several things what I would

Digitized by Google

like to be; among them were mining, medicine and law. He did not approve for me to take up mining. His reason was that people who study that course simply wish to make money. They have no thought for the welfare of the world. 'I want to knock that out of your head' he said. If he had used his time to make money he would be a very rich man. To make money is very easy; but to train men for one's country is very hard. 'Now' he said 'many people think and a large number of people have asked me if I were to make a preacher out of you. I told them that I am making a man of you, as to what you will do I leave it to the Lord."

Later on Ah Fong went to New York to study in Columbia College. He says:

"When I went to New York, Dr. Hatcher did not know anything about it at that time. I only wrote him a letter that I was going to New York to work my way through Columbia. When he received my letter he at once wrote me a long and kind letter. It was full of advice and said that he was sorry that he could not support me through the University; but that he had great hope for me that I would succeed in my effort. He would be very lonesome when he was at Fork Union without me, but no matter where I would be there would be a place for me in his heart and still claimed me as a member of his family."

Some time before this he wrote an article which seems never to have been published. The manuscript bears no intimation of the purpose for which it was written. The subject is, "The Monumental Idea" and begins as follows:

"The dread of oblivion is universal. The human soul shrinks appalled from the possibility of being forgotten. In some way we carry the thought that we are a part of the universal whole and that it would be fatal to lose our place."

He declared once in a sermon that the idea of annihilation was a more horrible doctrine to him than that of everlasting punishment. He had in him, very strong, the desire to be remembered. In the above treatment of the "the monumental idea" he thus continues:

Digitized by Google

"Only the stranded and lost can face the terrors of oblivion.

"To many of those who take a larger view of life and understand its relationships there comes another thought. . . There is the desire that the monument, while standing guard over the dust of the dead, shall bear a message to those who come after.

"To those of us who travel here and there, the sight of the cemetery, or the white slabs in the family burial place in the country, furnishes touching and pathetic proofs of the prevalence of the memorial passion. From the fragment of marble which tells of the little one gone, to the towering shaft, or the elaborate mausoleum, we catch proof of this quenchless longing of the human soul.

"A monument ought to be something more than a grotesque effort to scare oblivion away from the graves of men. The monument is an appeal to matter—voiceless, unproductive and dead—to confer historic immortality upon those who ought not to be forgotten. It is asking too much of stone, marble and brass. They cannot speak, nor travel, nor sing, nor sound the praises of the dead. They can only stand still, bearing their inscriptions and enduring the pelting of the storm and the cankerous rust of the ages. While history may be made to stand as a sentinel over the graves of the great, yet the historian and prophet must meet at every monument, the one telling of what has been and the other telling of things yet to be.

"There is something transcendently noble in the thought that one can impart a monumental value to the part that he plays in this life, so that he will be remembered, not so much by what he did as by what his constructive life caused to be done after he has passed within the veil.

"In one respect every man must be his own monument builder. He must either enrich his life with achievements so brilliant and imperishable that they will be his sufficient memorial, or he must confer benefactions which will cause others to commemorate his virtues."

In looking over his papers I found the following document. It was written a few days before his 75th birthday and apparently was mentioned to no one and laid aside. It is probable that the following words about himself were written as he sat in his study musing upon the near approach of his Anniversary:

Digitized by Google

"A Personal Sermon"

"The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away.

"Moses stands as the unchallenged author of the 90th Psalm. . . . Seventy years he puts as the last mile-stone of a long life; beyond that continued life is exceptional, burdensome and speeding swiftly to its close. It is always dangerous for men to speak or write concerning themselves. Truly it ought to be that by this time I can speak without passion or prejudice about myself. I am too far from the asperities and strifes of earth to have my deliverances affected with the warrior's spirit and too grateful for the multiplication of my days to be apprehensive as to what is to come.

"With the passage of a few days I will reach my 75th anniversary. This will put me upon the middle line between seventy and eighty—that is, if I do hold out. In the last letter which I received from Spurgeon he told me of the complex infirmities and tortures of the flesh with the comment that he could not hold out much longer. Truly and gratefully I can put on record that I have no disease within my mortal frame of which I am conscious and scarcely a pain or disturbance in any function of my bodily system and yet I am distinctly aware of the gradual relaxation of my powers. My grasp lacks its olden vigor and my step takes on an increasing heaviness. Within the circle of my family, and yet more perhaps outside of it, there has been a strong desire that my seventy-fifth birthday should in some way have some celebration. With no distinct wish to have my way about it I have felt a strong aversion to any demonstration in my honor at the half-way house between seventy and eighty. It falls in better with my sense of the fitness of things to compare my own experiences with the philosophical utterances of Moses. By his measure of life I desire to lay my own frail life down and see how the two look in the light of each other.

"No fantastic deceptions as to my unfailing youth have possessed me. I have marked the approach of age with seriousness and gratitude and have never for a moment sought to deceive myself about it. The catchy phrases about being "only as old as we feel ourselves to be" and of being "as good at seventy as at thirty-five" never fit my lips. Indeed I have

Digitized by Google

AT THE ALBEMARLE ASSOCIATION

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

thought that age was too respectable and too honorable to be disowned or disguised.

"Finis-so far—"

He here speaks of the gradual relaxation of his powers. His words were true as regarded his bodily powers, but his mental forces seemed as alert and vigorous as ever and until the very end they maintained their usual high standard. Walking became an increasing burden with him. He avoided steep climbs and and in cities would always take the street car, if only to save himself the walk of a few squares. His weight at this time was considerable and in view of the load of avoirdupois that he had to carry it is not surprising that he oft-times preferred for the street car, instead of his two feet, to carry it. And yet he did a goodly share of walking. He would frequently walk for exercise. There was at Careby a long front porch and also a concrete walk semi-circular in shape in front of Careby and along these he would often tramp back and forth; and he would never walk aimlessly. He would move as if he were walking for a purpose and a very important one. There would be—as he walked— an animation in his face, as if there were delightful results awaiting him at the end of his walk,—provided however, that he would not loiter by the way. Often he would count his steps out loud as he walked,—"one, two, three, four," and so on to a hundred or more. He considered that he stepped a yard at a time and he knew well the distance, in yards, of all the walks over which he frequently tramped. During his sickness at our house, in Baltimore,—at a time when he was long shut in—he would get up out of his bed and start on a tramp through the house,—into the front room and back through the hall into the rear room and then down the stairway and through the first floor and up the stairs again and thus with earnest, determined steps he would make the circuit of the house many times as if each step he was taking involved the destinies of several nations of the earth.

During his last years when he would walk rapidly his right hand would swing vigorously at his side while his left hand

Digitized by Google

hung in one position, and as he walked his left shoulder would seem to dip just a little,—as if his left leg had become slightly shorter than the other.

Another fact must be mentioned. During his later life his hours of sleep each night were few and somewhat irregular. He would always read himself to sleep at night and we were always afraid that, with his poor eye-sight and with his custom of sleeping in all manner of places, he would knock over the lamp at the moment when he would become drowsy and seek to put out the light. He would often snatch a nap during the day in his morris chair. One night while reading in his chair he had dropped off to sleep with the lamp very near his hand and his wife said to Edith, "I'm afraid your father will in waking move his hand and knock over that lamp" and her words had hardly been spoken before he threw back his hand and over went the lighted lamp. It was hurled out of the window and the danger was averted. The wonder is that many more such accidents did not occur.

He nearly always carried magazines or neswpapers with him in his travels in order that he might be sure of having reading material in the night hours. Often he would awaken far in the night and in order to hasten the return of his sleep he would light his lamp and open his magazine or book for another reading. In a short while he would feel the drowsy symptoms, out would go the lamp and he would quickly drop into slumber once more.

His sneezing outbursts were often very loud and furnished great amusement to the grandchildren. He did not perpetrate such explosions in the social circle, or in religious assemblies,—at least he seemed to moderate the performance on such occasions; but often in the home circle, when the "coast was clear," and especially if the young folks were in evidence, he would let himself out and his sneezes could be heard hundreds of yards in the distance. Sometimes he would startle those in his presence by one of these shouting—almost screaming—sneezes and then with uplifted eye-brows and an amused smile on his

Digitized by Google

face he would watch the company as they would recover from their shock and break into a laugh.

"I remember" said a lady, "the first time my little girl heard him sneeze and it frightened her so that she was on the verge of crying". Such performances were not frequent; but they at least came often enough to show his ability in that direction. Often in his later life when he dropped upon the lounge for a nap he would advertize the fact by vigorous snoring which would continue in undulating fashion for several minutes and suddenly explode in a nervous gasp.

During the Summer he attended Associations, dedicated churches, made all manner of addresses, directed the affairs of the Academy, kept his typewriter busy and did other things too numerous to be catalogued here.

To his friend, Dr. E. B. Bryan, of Franklin College, who had recently been elected to the presidency of Colgate University, he writes a letter which closed as follows:

"I could write all day but this Academy business has me by the throat for several days.—and so, with a tear for Franklin, with a shout for Colgate and with a prayer for you, with honor for your wife, with fatherly admiration for Helen, with pride over your boy and with ever so much affection for your other girl, with a dumb grief for "Powle" and St. Bertha and a wish that the kingdom of God may come and that you and I may stand side by side when the shouting day comes, I am as ever and ever will be.

"Your lover,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

"Your father had a sort of collapse after returning from church" writes my mother. "He had been to Richmond to buy furniture for the Academy and had a hard day walking around. He is better now."

He wrote me on Sept. 14th, the 'bluest' letter which I ever received from him. A young man who had been staying at Careby whom he had greatly loved for many years and who made a trip to Richmond had, after a long season of abstinence,

Digitized by Google

fallen a victim to his old enemy strong drink. There were other burdens, but it was the fall of the youth that depressed him the most. He was a companion for him during his visits at Careby helping him in all manner of ways.

"His fall is a blow to me" he writes "I leaned on him for everything. Besides my expenses are very great and my income next to nothing.

"But never mind. Let me just tell you my sorrows, but not to bother you—only to relieve me. After all it is not very desirable for a worthless man to live too long. Just think about me and pray for me.

"Yours,

"W. E. H."

A low drop was that for him. But it is not unlikely that something occured soon thereafter to send his spirits on the upward climb; a boy may have appeared on the scene or some needy case may have drawn his thoughts into other channels and gradually lifted him back to his former level.

Mr. George Schmelz writes him from Asheville, N. C., "Judge Haralson, who is stopping at the Victoria Inn where I am located. . . . says he loves you better than any other man he knows."

At the Portsmouth Association in September, Dr. Hugh C. Smith preached the introductory sermon. At the close of his sermon a note,—gratefully cherished even until this day by Dr. Smith—was passed to him; he opened it and read as follows:

"Dear Hugh,—I heard your sermon with exceeding pleasure. It was fresh, fervent and was effectively delivered. My soul swelled with pride and joy as I heard you.

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

His new book of reminiscences was nearing completion. We spent several days together at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond in October, working on the book. We shut ourselves up in a room, and the typewriter ticked away, page after page,

Digitized by Google

as he dictated and his words came as fast as they could be put upon paper. One day I asked him—as I came to a pause with the machine and as he sat by wondering what he should write next—"How do you explain your gift for humor?" I wanted his reply of course for the book which he was then writing. He shrank, at first, from the question, but saw that I was set upon drawing him out and so he started off, with the tick of the typewriter keeping him company as he dictated the following paragraph:

"A friend has asked me how I got to be humorous. The question hits me in a new spot and savors of the preposterous. There does not seem to be any humor in me; it has no place in my natural endowments nor my equipments so far as I can understand. If there is anything in me that has to do with humor it can hardly be inherent and at best is nothing more than a very limited capacity to discover the humor of outside situations. There is no enginery within me for manufacturing humor and if it is at all proper to mention humor and me the same day it must be because I have a scant and unlocated gift for discovering those conjunctions in human affairs which titulate the people and call forth their laughter."

His field glass swept the literary horizon in search of a striking title for his new book. He shied off from such expressions as "Reminiscences", or "Recollections of a long life" and the like.

"As to the title of the book" he writes me "I am still undetermined, but my mind settles on toward something like these two or three. 'Happenings along the way'; 'Things seen along the road'; 'Incidents along the Highway'; 'Garnered as I came'; 'The hindsights along the Way'; 'A Basket of Fragments.'

"Too precious even to be named were our days of hiding and of toil last week at the Jefferson."

After a hurried run back to Richmond (400 miles) he returns to South Carolina for meetings at Saluda, where he writes to Orie:

Digitized by Google

"My eyes are better,—that is, one of them—for really I have but one that is of any service and that is sensitive and seems incapable of being helped by glasses."

His failing eye sight put no visible mark upon his eyes and did not at all mar his countenance. In fact his wonderfully bright and sympathetic eyes retained their luster and depth to the very end. In November he wrote me concerning his publisher from Nashville, Tenn., where he was holding meetings at the First Baptist Church:

"Revell and myself are fighting on the deep blue sea, but with no carnal weapons and with no extra blood in our eye. He sent me a new arrangement of chapters and I am sending him another recast which seems to me more natural and satisfactory".

Invitations came to him from the North and West, as well as from the South, from pastors that he would aid them in meetings. He had promised to aid Dr. Vichert at Fort Wayne and Dr. L. A. Crandall of Minneapolis during the winter.

Dr. Arthur Jones of Colgate University writes him:

"But in spite of all the names you have called me I do love you. Oh, the times we have had together."

"You can never know how you blessed me when you were here" writes Dr. R. M. Inlow, of Nashville, whom he had aided in meetings in November."

In December he held revival meetings in Washington for Rev. B. D. Gaw who thus writes concerning him:

"It was a benediction indeed to have this 'father in Israel' in our home. How beautiful and inspiring to see this veteran soldier of the cross doing battle so valiantly for his king."

His friend Mr. R. S. Barbour, sent him a handsome "traveling case,"—saying "I feel that the Baptists of Virginia would suffer an irrepable loss if the time should come that your health

Digitized by Google

was not sufficient for you to continue your valuable aid in our cause."

The friend of his soul Judge Haralson of Alabama writes him on Dec. 22nd:

"If I knew how to express more love and joy and good wishes for you I would add it. Do you ever think of me these days?"

On Christmas day he writes to me wafting "millions of good wishes" and adding, "They are so strong that neither snow nor blizzard can chill their ardor nor stay their flight."

My mother writes:

"To Eldridge I would say that I think his father needs his presence more than he ever did. He seems fat and strong and does his usual work but Elizabeth and I think we can see traces of old age creeping on him,—very naturally we should. He wants children around him all the time."

He went to aid Dr. J. F. Vichert in meetings at Fort Wayne, Indiana, but there arrived at Fort Wayne also a cold wave, fierce and blustering. It gave him a shivering blow. He writes to Orie:

"It cuts me low to think that after our matchless comradeship during Christmas we are now so far apart. I believe I never enjoyed you so much.

"The thermometer here is skirmishing with zero and the news is that the North Pole, having been discovered and made much of, has decided to make a pilgrimage towards the equator."

He usually smiled his difficulties out of court, but this Indiana weather hit him from all sides.

"The snort of the blizzard is in the street" he writes me "and his white frost forecasts yet greater severities than we now have. I am much cheered by the outlook of the meeting though it must suffer some under the stress of weather.

Digitized by Google

"The Seminary has been brow-beating and cajoling me for a year to get me to give some specific help in favor of the enlarged endowment. As usual I fall below the mastery of fraternal appeals and I have consented to give them a few months and with this in view I have called in all other engagements.

"Do give Dr. Dodd my love—just blizzards and cataracts of it."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XLI

1910

SERIOUS SICKNESS AT FORT WAYNE, IND. ARTICLE ON "THE GRIPPE." CLOTHES. LETTER TO DR. C. H. RYLAND. SELECTING THE TITLE. "ALONG THE TRAIL OF THE FRIENDLY YEARS." MESSAGES ABOUT HIS NEW BOOK.

About midnight on January 5th, my door bell rang and a telegram was handed me from Fort Wayne which read, "Your father ill; come at once." I started immediately and next morning at Fort Wayne I found him utterly prostrated by a virulent attack of the Grippe.

The following letter from the pastor Dr. Vichert, to his daughter Orie was written just before the collapse came:

"Your father reached Fort Wayne late on Saturday night. He preached most inspiringly twice on Sunday and again on Monday night. The weather Tuesday was excessively cold and, to use his own expression "struck its blades into every chink". . . Your father is a confirmed and inveterate worker and has no mercy on himself apparently. I am trying to slow down his pace a little while he is with me and I have positively refused to take any dictation from him today."

I remained with him for several days and then, upon permission of the Doctor, we bundled him up carefully, stowed him away in a Pullman apartment and I brought him as far as Baltimore where, in my home, we had the pleasure, for seven weeks, of nursing him back to health. During the journey from Fort Wayne he spent a part of the time while lying on the couch in dictating an article on the Grippe which was published

Digitized by Google

in the Herald and in this dictation he spoke, not only out of a full heart but also out of an aching body. The article met high praise from the public.

It ran as follows:

"Five times I have fallen under its deadly stroke. Heretofore it has always struck me in a new place but in a way that all the other places felt the shock. This time its blow was Briarean, touching me at all points at the same moment.

"I have taken it rather crossly that my family finds actual satisfaction out of my sickness when delirium comes on. They take it as a token that the case is not serious and tell me that I always shoulder forth my budget of domestic grievances and exact summary adjustments under a thin delirious disguise.

"This time my family lost the gaiety of the occasion, but the Vicherts, Dr. Harrod, the trained nurse and the rest of the earth furnished ample scope for my pessimistic fury."

He also tells how it played havoc with his appetite:

"My appetite lost its sense of preference. In the former days roast beef and irish potatoes made me sorry I could not live in London so as to get them at their best all the time; but when these two choice edibles were brought in I was as much offended as if the whole of the Armour slaughter house had been dumped in upon me. The taste of beef enraged my anatomy.

"And so with the Irish potatoes, the most universal, the most toothsome, a true cosmopolite, at home in every climate and soil, good every day and three times a day, good under varied preparations, of all its kingdom the best to me; and yet when its fine old flavor saluted me on my return to civilization I drew back with horror. My stomach cried out against it.

"On the other hand there was the orange—no favorite of mine; I had a cultivated antipathy set up against the orange, but when I wearily awoke from my sixth knockout I employed all the few mental fragments which I brought back with me in scheming for oranges. And Coffee—delicious, steaming, zestful—how I had loved it; how I resented the publication in religious papers of attacks upon coffee and encomiums upon such sniffling and fraudulent substitutes for coffee as postum—(Bah)—and cocoas. Imagine myself, upon touching earth once

Digitized by Google

more, to find that coffee had lost its charm. It looked as if I were coming back to the earth, but not the old happy earth where I was when the monster struck me.

"A secret telegram sped out of Fort Wayne to Baltimore which, in very short order, brought my son Dr. E. B. Hatcher to my bed side. I remember that while in London some years ago I chanced to find that Dr. J. P. Boyce was in the city and very ill. I made haste to find him and, when his daughters brought me in, his face ran wet with tears and grasping my hand he said, 'Oh, Hatcher your face is the light of Heaven.' It is worth something to one sick far from home, though never so well attended, to have a familiar face,—a face behind which there is love unmeasured,—to break suddenly into the sick room.

"My sickness has its irritations and its uncertainties, but when I think of all the health, travel, service, happiness and friendships which have gladdened my way I take counsel of my memory and of my hope also, and leave the present to work to its end.

"This crooked and disjointed letter is contrary to the order of those who have me in hand, but I hope that not all the people will regret that I got this article in spite of the doctors and the nurses."

He was a model of patience as he lay upon his bed in Baltimore, with his doctor seeking day by day to get him started towards recovery. His strength seemed fond of the zero point and the physician's efforts to coax it upwards were unavailing at first. The young Doctor, whom Dr. Hatcher eyed with many a penetrating glance at first as if he was seeking to discover what was on the inside, went away from each visit saying to himself, "Well that is surely a unique and wonderful man. I never tackled just such a patient as he. My, but he is bright!" Dr. Hatcher became fond of the young physician.

His publisher asked him to sign his name on a sheet of paper and send it to him as he wanted his name [in his own handwriting] to go in the new book. From that time he put his pen to work and one day we found his bed and floor almost covered with papers on which he had been writing his name. He had a habit, when sitting near a table, whether talking or listening, of moving his hand rapidly back and forth on the table top as

Digitized by Google

if he had a pen between his fingers and were writing something important and, even if there was no table near at hand, often during the conversation he would be moving his fingers along his knee,—or in the air, thus going through the form of rapid writing. At other times,—when not apparently writing—he would tap with his fore-finger on the table or desk. He would often do these things at the dining room table and when he was not indulging in these two apparently unconscious habits he would often—though not habitually—rattle his knife, or fork. or spoon while he was talking,—especially while waiting between courses. It looked as if the motion of the fingers of his right hand in some way formed a pleasant accompaniment to his thoughts and his talking.

He yielded to the appeal from the Louisville Seminary that he would lead their financial campaign in Virginia for raising $200,000 and even from his sick bed he directed this movement,—selecting his lieutenants in the state and organizing and directing them in the work. Every week he filled a page in the Herald with breezy items about the campaign. Orie and Edith had given him a new overcoat and he thus writes to Orie:

"Anna has conceived a cruel prejudice against my old overcoat, but it has a sort of old-oaken-bucket charm for me and I know not exactly how to give it up.

"Eldridge wrote you a day or two ago. I suppose he told you how I was getting along, though if he knows how I am getting along he knows better than I do. I am still thinking emptily about the title for the book. I drop two or three here; 'Paying court to other Days', 'From Bedford to Careby Hall'; 'A Budget of the Best'.

"Possibly by this time you have more suggestions."

His attitude towards his old clothes—and his new ones as well—was interesting. At Careby the "old oaken bucket charm" seemed to linger around several of his suits, which could name—each of them—several birthdays. He had them folded and kept in their appropriate places. It looked as if each gar-

Digitized by Google

GRANDFATHER AND ANNA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ment had for him certain friendly associations and as the months sped by he would wear,—now one suit and now another. He loved to get clothes,—and he would often get the very best; but he seemed to have an aversion to wearing them, especially at first. It looked as if he almost regarded the wearing of a elegant suit as a degradation of it; at any rate it was often the case that our appeal to him to put on his "fine suit" would be unavailing. He seemed to enjoy thinking of it as reposing in all of its undisturbed splendor in his closet or drawer at home. It ought to be stated however that one of these elegant broad cloths was kept for a sacred occasion,—viz., his burial. His pride as to his death reached even to the clothes in which his body should be clad in its final abode. He looked his best in a black suit, which presented an impressive contrast to his snowy white locks and beard. I can see him now, in memory, as he stood dressed in such a suit one Sunday on the pulpit of the Eutaw Place Church in Baltimore. He had preached and Dr. Dood, the pastor, was leading into the baptistry at the side of the pulpit a candidate to be baptized. Dr. Hatcher had walked to the extreme front of the pulpit and was leaning slightly forward that he might witness the ceremony and in his dark suit, and with his flashing eye, his genial, animated face and his patriarchal appearance he presented a picture that was striking and—to borrow the word that was applied to him on that day by another—"beautiful".

He had received a letter that gave his heart a happy flutter. It was from his Chinese boy, Ah Fong who, after graduating with honor at Richmond College, had gone to New York to earn money with which to enter Columbia College in New York. In his letter, after telling of his experiences in New York, Ah Fong writes:

"I am happy and like this work [in a Chinese restaurant] all right except with the fact that I would not be able to see you for quite a long time. But I think of you every day; of your kindness and help to the stranger from the Orient. No, I shall never forget you and it will always give me pleasure to remember

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ment had for him certain friendly associations and as the months sped by he would wear—now one suit and now another. He loved to get clothes—and he would often get the very best; but he seemed to have an aversion to wearing them, especially at first. It looked as if he almost regarded the wearing of a elegant suit as a degradation of it, at any rate it was often the case that our appeal to him to put on his "fine suit" would be unavailing. He seemed to enjoy thinking of it as reposing in all of its undisturbed splendor in his closet or drawer at home. It ought to be stated however that one of these elegant broad cloths was kept for a sacred occasion—viz., his burial. His pride as to his death reached even to the clothes in which his body should be clad in its final abode. He looked his best in a black suit, which presented an impressive contrast to his snowy white locks and beard. I can see him now, in memory, as he stood dressed in such a suit one Sunday on the pulpit of the Eutaw Place Church in Baltimore. He had preached and Dr. Dood, the pastor, was leading into the baptistry at the side of the pulpit a candidate to be baptized. Dr. Hatcher had walked to the extreme front of the pulpit and was leaning slightly forward that he might witness the ceremony and in his dark suit, and with his flashing eye, his get all animated face and his patriarchal appearance he presented a picture that was striking and—to borrow the word that was applied to him on that day by another—"beautiful".

He had received a letter that gave his heart a happy flutter. It was from his Chinese boy, Ah Fong, who after graduating with honor at Richmond College, had gone to New York to earn money with which to [illegible] New York. In his letter, after telling of his [illegible] New York, Ah Fong writes:

"I am happy and [illegible] restaurant] all right except with [illegible] to see you for quite a long time. [illegible] day; of your kindness and help [illegible] No, I shall never forget you [illegible] to remember

you as my benefactor. . . I am sorry to hear that you are sick. . . I would like to be there and attend to you.

"When I first came here the other people had a hard time to explain themselves and I was in the same fix. But now I could understand some Chinese and could talk a little already. The Chinese comes back to me very rapidly. . . With two exceptions all the waiters are Chinese students who are working their way through College.

"I hope to save at least seventy-five dollars per month, if not more, so that I may enter Columbia next Fall. . . Please write to me as a line from you always gladdens my heart.

"Gratefully Yours,

"A Fong Yeung."

The reader has hardly forgotten the orphan boy, Coleman M————, whom Dr. Hatcher many years before this, took to his heart and home and sought to train for noble manhood. At this writing he is Dr. Coleman M———, a very successful surgeon. He thus writes to Mrs. Hatcher:

"My Dear Mrs. Hatcher,—I can never forget the fact that whatever measure of success I win in my profession is due in large measure, to the wonderful kindness, the princely generosity and the fatherly love of your dear husband. I often think of the dear happy days when you played mother to me. The love and kindness of you and Dr. Hatcher will always remain one of the most cherished memories of my childhood.

"I thank you for your invitation to Careby and can assure that there is nothing that Nelly and I would enjoy more.

"With much love.

"Coleman."

One day during his convalescence he said, "Eldridge get your machine I want to write a letter" and as he sat by my desk he dictated the following epistle to his friend of a life-time, Dr. Charles H. Ryland. I took no carbon copy of the letter—but I realized as I was writing it for him that I would surely want such a fine letter for the biography when I should come to write it and so before mailing it I made a copy of it,—without his knowledge, for I did not wish him in his letter-writing to

Digitized by Google

have his mind confused with the thought that he was writing for posthumous publication.

"BALTIMORE, MD., Feb. 13, 1910.

"DR. CHAS. H. RYLAND:

"MY EVER BELOVED FRIEND,—A letter from Richmond tells me that you are sick. It does not indicate that your sickness is of a grave nature, but the fact that you are out of kelter comes home to me. Our little College circle grows more and more pathetic as it shrinks by one loss after another and those of them that are left grapple my heart in a most intense way. I hope that your sickness is not serious, that you will soon be out and at it again and that when my dust is put in its silent home that you will be there as a friend through all the changing years. I have found you one always steadfast, ever true and constantly commanding my warmest affection. Everything that pertains to you pleases me except your sorrows and your burdens and even them would I gladly share.

"I am publishing a book,—somewhat of the reminiscent sort. The writing of it and now the correction of its proof, has greatly revived my early recollections, both of Bedford and of the college and indeed of all the intervening time. At so many turns and forks of the way you come before me, ever the same honest, quiet, true-souled Charles whom Harvey and I learned to love in our early college days. I cannot think of Richmond College without your figure and your record ever breaking upon me and the sight of you is as sweet to me as the morning light after a restless night. Your voice carries something that always proves a tonic to me and while you do not write to me often, and then in only a business way, the sight of your old handwriting, unchanged by a half-century's busy strain always brings good cheer.

"So my friend of the silver locks I greet you. I bid you cherish life, keep an eye on your limitations and continue to live. For you and your family my soul riots with good wishes. Your home in many ways has been ideally beautiful in my eyes and I think I can truly say I never entered its doors without feeling the better for it.

"This letter is not intended to deal with my own case, and yet you will wish to know how it goes with me. I am paying the penalty of an overstrained life. Last year I preached about 275 sermons and delivered not much less than 100 addresses of one sort and another, not in-

Digitized by Google

cluding after-talks in revivals after my sermons. Besides I wrote the biggest part of the material for my 350 page book, canvassed for the Seminary and for the Academy, besides conducting the correspondence for the Academy. Of course it was too much; it brought on eczema and then came my attack of La Grippe and the Doctor and my trained nurse and my ever devoted children in Baltimore are trying to nurse me back to my old vigor. Thus far they have done admirably well and but for the fierce and pitiless Baltimore weather, I think I would be about ready to take my staff and journey back to old Virginia. I'd like to come, earth has no spot so sacred to me as Virginia, for I know it so well that I almost imagine it is a single spot. I would like to come back to get the healing efficacy of your smile, to see Bagby, to see Shipman, to see Charley Herndon, to see Lake, to see Boatwright and of course to see Careby Hall and all that it implies. Edith and Orie run down from Bryn Mawr as if they were simply over in the woods beyond the branch and when they do not come, they do other things almost as invigorating and consoling. I have written you a long letter, longer I fear than you are willing to read, but read enough of it to know that old W. E. of the long ago still carries Charles in his heart. We know not what the future holds for us; but how great and gracious the outputs of Heaven have been to us in the past and still are and we need not fear that the Bread of life will run short nor that the oil of Salvation will give out. The big part of it all I humbly trust and believe for you and me is yet to come.

"W. E. Hatcher."

It was during his convalescent period that he had the pleasant wrangle about the title of his new book of Reminiscences. He selected as the title "The Song of the Trail" and seemed to think that in that title he had discovered a jewel of the first water. But scarcely anyone of us liked it. But he clung to it, and defended it from all attacks and plead its cause strongly. He finally gave up the battle,—I think with much regret, though he did not say so. He declared that he must at least retain the word "Trail"; so he finally worked up the title "Along the trail of the years"; and then he wanted a word to go with "trail" and we thought of the adjectives "happy" and "busy" and others were thought of. We had lively times around his bed

Digitized by Google

balancing words, hunting through the dictionary and discussing the different titles. At last the word "friendly" seemed to please him greatly and the title then read, "Along the trail of the friendly years," and he took his stand upon that. A helpful counselor in our discussions was Dr. C. H. Dodd.

Next came a genial wrangle with his publisher—when he sent him the title. Mr. Revell did not like the word "friendly" as well as the words "long" or "active". He thought the title would sound better reading either, "Along the trail of the long years", or "Along the trail of the active years" and he wrote Dr. Hatcher to this effect. In reply Dr. Hatcher wrote the following letter which Mr. Revell was so much pleased with that he sent it for use in this memoir. In this letter Dr. Hatcher tells why he does not like the titles "Along the trail of the active years" and "Along the trail of the long years,":

"BALTIMORE, MD., Feb., 16th 1910.

"MR. PAUL MOODY:

"MY DEAR MR. MOODY,—Your courteous letter came today. I did not wire you because I needed a little more time for reflection. I feel that the matter must be settled and I wish what I say to be final and yet leaving to Mr. Revell some margin for the exercise of his judgment at the last moment.

"The two titles which Mr. Revell suggests differ only in the word 'long' and the word 'active'. The first betokens age and is not inspiring; the second implies my industry and activity and has something of the self-complimentary about it. I think of my life not as an output so much as the product of God's productive grace. I forget the things that are behind so far as they celebrate me. I would prefer therefore as the title 'ALONG THE TRAIL OF THE FRIENDLY YEARS.'

"It has in it the suggestion of the helpfulness of the world and the providence of God as I have come along the way and besides it is not commonplace.

"With this statement, I put my last suggestion in a bunch with Mr. Revell's two, with the agreement that he will use that adjective of the three which you and he are fully convinced is best, bearing in mind my preference strongly expressed, but yielded if you are convinced that it would be better for the book. Between 'long' and 'active' I would prefer 'long'.

Digitized by Google

I have never mentioned the subject of a foreword because I do not care about it. I would be glad to dedicate the book to my son unless your house has some decided prejudice in the matter of dedications. I inclose the form of dedication which you will oblige me by using. You expressed a purpose to put my autograph on the front outside page. I prefer to send you a copy and will do so at once.

"Very Sincerely,

"W. E. Hatcher."

He decided upon his sick bed that he would leave for Virginia on a certain day and when that day arrived—to our dismay—he went. We did not at first take seriously his discision to go on the early date and we had much pleasant cross firing on the subject; but our remonstrances and our uplifted hands and horror stricken faces were unavailing. I went with him to Richmond where he plunged at once into his work for the Seminary,—sick though he was. He seemed determined to crowd as much labor into his remaining days as possible:

"He is quite cheerful today" writes my mother from Careby Hall. "I hear him whistling as he is packing. He seems to be nearly through with the proof [of his new book]. He cannot work without getting tired. I'm grieved to see him lose his flesh, as I know you will be. You had better keep up with him in Petersburg. Tell him to write you how he is, if he gets the attention he needs, etc.

"Of course it looks cruel almost to see a sick man travel and work, but I do not think we can keep him in and I do not know that it would be best. The best thing seems to be for us to keep up with him; get him to keep to his medicines and not overwork."

He writes from Richmond, "I find it a tough business to get back my old and enduring vitality. Dr. Mullins says that I must not take collections or do personal canvassing for the Seminary but I am at least going out to B———— [a country church] tomorrow and seek to hammer that Pharasaic little band into benevolent shape." He was cheered by a jovial letter from his friend, Dr. Arthur Jones of Colgate University:

Digitized by Google

"Sunday, as I was going to Church, President X———— came up. Said he, 'I received a letter from a young friend of mine the other day and he said to give his love to you.' 'And who was that?' said I. 'Willie Hatcher' says he. And so it came safely. Thanks, very much. But I never let on that I had earlier heard from Br'er Hatcher. So X———— goes along as chesty as you please thinking he's the only man on the job who gets letters from 'The gentleman from Virginia'. Oh well, X———— is all right. He's got religion; that's what's the matter with him. Say, but he gave us a noble sermon a week ago Sunday. It was great. No mincing matters. Christ is God. That's his creed; and he wants the folks to know it.

"Oh, dear brother that memory [of the meetings of 1908] is very sweet and precious to many hearts in Hamilton. . . I am entirely satisfied that you never did such preaching before or since."

He writes on April 20th from Petersburg where he was holding meetings that he was not very well. "But" said he "I am thankful that I can work at least a little in the service of the Lord." On the 23rd he writes from Petersburg:

"I finished up my Sunday School lessons this afternoon and mailed them—a happy event . . Indeed the folks are going on rediculously about your scrappy old father but it will wear off. Crowds come to the meetings. . . Dedications are piling up on me. If my memory can be trusted I have nine engagements.

"I am really in doubt about the Convention [at Baltimore in May] I am far from well and my strength quickly wears out. I really fear it will end my life to go through all of it and my present thought is to come for the Trustee [Seminary] meeting, see the opening and fade out at the moment when my vitality goes down. But never mind as to this."

During these meetings at the First Baptist Church in Petersburg and while in his weak condition he not only prepared his S. S. lessons but did his final work on his new book, "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years". Dr. Taylor, the pastor, says:

"The last chapters of that book were prepared for the printer in my Petersburg study. We spent the forenoons revising

Digitized by Google

the manuscript and correcting the proof. Happier hours I have possibly never seen. When we read together for the last time the last chapter of the manuscript, before wrapping it for the publisher, both were in tears. During that same revival meeting we also prepared together a goodly number of the Sunday-School lessons for the Southern Baptist Teacher. I was an expert with the typewriter and your father would walk the floor and dictate and thus working together our morning tasks were a mutual delight and to me they have left life-long blessings."

At the close of the meetings he writes to Orie, "I am not in good shape, by any means, and am crushed by many burdens" He seemed almost painfully perplexed about coming to the Baltimore Convention. From Careby Hall he writes me on May 2nd:

"My weakness has been pitiable and the thought of the Convention terrifies me. If I come it must be for only a fragment of time. I want to be there for two or three things but an overstrain would kill me."

He came to the Convention, remained two days, was busy about many denominational matters, returned to Fork Union and a few days later was in Louisville for a conference in connection with the Seminary.

It was at this time that his new book bearing the title "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years" made its public appearance. He had his first sight of the book as we were walking through the book room at the Convention in Baltimore. He was of course anxious regarding the reception which the book would receive from the public. In a few days the messages began to come in. "I began reading it one night and could not let go until the morning" writes Dr. P. T. Hale. Dr. Prestridge writes that he had read the book "with eager impetuosity and in tears" and then adds, "Take good care of yourself honored brother. You are too valuable to the Denomination for you to be careless." In a steady stream, from all parts of the world, there flowed in to him letters from those who had read

Digitized by Google

the book and received light and blessing from it. The closing years of his life were brightened by assurances that came to him from every direction of the cheer and help that his book had given. They reached him not only through the mail, but he met them on the trains and almost wherever he went.

Let us open the volume and make an effort to discover its charm. It possessed many attractive features,—such as its sparkling style, its gleams of wit and humor, its singularly interesting short stories and the striking personality and history of the author; but it was not these qualities that gave the book its power over the reader. The distinguishing feature of the work was the rich spiritual note that sounded out clearly through the volume. The book ministered to the heart as well as to the brain. It stands for a particular truth, and that is that the old fashioned doctrines of grace will satisfy the human heart in this modern age as it did in the former days. But think not reader that Dr. Hatcher fills his book with disquisitions on that theological subject. The chapters treat of his own many-sided career and do this in popular fashion, with wit, sarcasm, satire and humor combined with the pathetic and the tragical. He makes no effort to preach; but the sunlight is in every chapter and the truth gleams along every page and the story of his life, in some way, shows the triumphs of the old gospel, and, to many, the chapters have been like music of the olden days breaking out again in their souls.

A very interesting interchange of letters bearing on this feature of the book occured between Dr. Hatcher and Dr. J. F. Vichert, the present pastor of the First Baptist Church of Providence, R. I. This gentleman had written Dr. Hatcher asking him if he thought that "the good old times" which are pictured in the book could be repeated in these later days,—whether the spiritual experiences "so wonderful and rich in heavenly influence" which the author had had in his revival meetings could be expected under modern conditions.

"There are things in the book" writes Dr. Vichert "which bring the tears as one reads. I feel as if I would give my right

Digitized by Google

hand to see something like it now. In my own boyhood I witnessed some such scenes, but not for many a day have I seen anything of the kind. Are such things possible, or probable, in the atmosphere in which we live. . . The reading of your book kindled afresh a longing to see again something like what you there describe."

Dr. Hatcher's reply was full and will repay very careful reading.

"FORK UNION, VIRGINIA, July 13, 1910.

"DR. J. F. VICHERT,

"FORT WAYNE, IND.:

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,—Your letter finds me overwhelmed by work, but it is so sweet and refreshing in its spirit, and you will so soon be hiding yourself in the blessful recesses of Canada, that I must stop the singing bands and the busy hum of my wheels to make a grateful bow to you for being the admirable brother that you are.

"I was not at all unconscious of a change in the spiritual atmosphere in the christian world when I wrote my book, and I foresaw plainly enough that what I wrote would be an anachronism to some, a puzzle to others and possibly food for reflection for others. I have been beaten upon by many changes in the atmosphere of the world in which I live since I was a small boy, but I never thought that these changes indicated or foretold any particular changes in the world itself. It does look as if we are living a good deal closer to the spiritual north pole than many of us did some years ago; but that does not abate my confidence in the spiritual equator. As for myself, I wrote out of myself—that was the purpose of the book. I told of spiritual things as I saw them, and felt them, and believed them, and I expected that some would remand my experiences to primal times and mark me a religious hayseed. That I was willing to have done, though I have been quite surprised to find that some of the very best book critics have been among the most favorable in commenting on the experimental parts of my book. They seem willing to vote what I say as genuine literature and that on the ground that I write about real things. They say that I touch life at one point and others touch it at other points, but that there is reality and literary value in the way I express myself, just as Holmes and Emerson produced literature in telling their experiences

Digitized by Google

at the points where they touched life. Not that I am banking in any great way on the literary value and permanency of my book. It is simply a thesaurus into which I have collected some of my living memories; as to what posterity, or even posterity's present ancestors, may decide about the book is a question I have never thought about.

"I do not know at all that there will ever be a return of the exact spiritual conditions under which I have enacted my little part in the ministry. I see plainly enough the change in the wind, for while the wind is blowing I feel that the sense of divine power among christian people is evidently lessening, and there is a restless and nervous appeal to secondary causes to make up for the simple and unmistakable presence of God which we used to have. We must wait for another spiritual re-adjustment, and it must inevitably come—sure as we live under the dispensation of the Spirit. Exactly what it will be when it does come in its manifestations, I cannot foretell, but it must at least contain as distinct and reverential recognition of the Spirit's activity in forwarding the kingdom of God as there has ever been in the past.

"But I write mainly to say a word about you. I believe in you with an almighty faith, I think that I had discovered before your letter came some vagueness in your spiritual feeling. It seemed to me that you did not quite have an old-fashioned stand-point and did not see in the present situation enough to feel that you had an adequate substitute for what I have seemed to have. I thought that you were not very well satisfied with what you did have and had a wish that you had what I have had though you vaguely suspected that what I had had was out of date and could not be even galvanized into any sort of life now. God is with you as you are, and I think His power will work through you just as effectively as that power ever worked through me, or as you could ever work if you had the power which my book indicates that I had.

"Be up and at it, my noble friend. You are the chosen of the Lord beyond all doubt, and I love you, and rejoice in you, and pray for you, and expect great things of you. Go on into the woods of Canada and do all you can.

"Very Sincerely,

"Wm. E. Hatcher."

He had a curious experience in a western city, where he went to hold revival meetings. He tells of it in his new book. The

Digitized by Google

pastor whom he was aiding in the meetings suddenly informed him that he did not favor the "old fashioned doctrines" which he was then preaching. The incident with its sequels bears so strongly upon the above correspondence with Dr. Vichert and upon his new book that we give some of the details.

Dr. Hatcher in his new book thus tells his experience with the unsympathetic pastor mentioned above:

"He was a brother of great learning and of theological views so advanced that they had gotten out of sight of my doctrinal opinions. I found the atmosphere quite frosty upon my arrival and my first meeting with the pastor, while courtly and hospitable on his part was not notably enthusiastic."

An embarrassing conversation occured between the two later on:

"He told me that he had heard me in several services and he felt constrained to tell me that my method of theological statement was not adapted to his congregation—that the old dogmatic way of stating the gospel was effete and had lost its power and that he could not see any outlook for the meeting. "I told him with utmost good humor, that I had evidently been brought there under a misapprehension and, as he had not seen or heard me before I came, I readily acquitted him of all blame for whatever had been done. I said to him also that it would be altogether impossible for me to recast my theology, or my methods of doctrinal statement, so as to fit into his meeting and that we would have to face the question as to what ought to be done and that I would cordially leave it to him to decide the question.

"He left it to me, evidently supposing that I would bow myself out. . . When I got away from my candid and frigid brother I fell back on my old theology and concluded that I would talk with the Lord about it and I was old fashioned enough to tell my Divine Master that I was in a predicament. I told him that the Gospel that I had been preaching had worked moderately well where I had gone along and that I would be wonderfully glad to try it right there—indeed to put it on its mettle and see whether it had lost its power, telling him of course that if it was His will that I should beat a retreat, to sound his trumpet and I would take to my heels."

Digitized by Google

He then tells of the meetings, how they grew to a glorious climax and then he continues:

"I can say with all truth that I harbored no resentment against the pastor. I believed that we were so far apart intellectually and temperamentally that he was thoroughly sincere and besides I was so inexpressibly thankful to the Lord that He did not have quite so mean an opinion of me as the pastor did that I walked the mountain-tops. I am not sure that I ever had such strength and bliss as that meeting brought me, though I think I might have enjoyed it a fraction more if there had been just a few others who knew what had passed between the pastor and myself."

It was one more triumph of the "old gospel"—so called—which in his case was ever new in its rich manifestations. The above incident had several sequels. He continues (in his book):

"Let me add that sometime afterwards I went back and preached a plain old time experimental sermon at the same place, and in the hearing of the pastor, and after it was over he came and said some of the most gracious things about the sermon expressing his assured belief that it would be of great service to the people."

"Then, perhaps a dozen years afterwards, I preached again in his presence and preached with little change in my doctrinal standpoint, or in my method of expression and, at the same time also he was kind enough to say some things which I think I would characterize favorably enough by calling them compliments.

"I think we got closer together through the lapsing years. His candor did me actual good, though I could hardly imagine that my simple preaching could have had much in it to enrich his lofty and scholarly life. Possibly our paths, as they were coming nearer to the eternal world, were getting closer together and closer to the redeemer and, in those good ways, bringing us closer to each other."

The above story was published in his book "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years", in May 1910 and soon afterwards another chapter in the story—unpublished—occurred. The above-mentioned pastor read the paragraphs in the "Along the

Digitized by Google

Trail", and recognizing himself in the narrative he wrote a letter to Dr. Hatcher who thus refers to the letter in the following communication to me:

"P. S.—I have just opened my mail. You remember how the pastor at D———— treated me when I went there for a revival. He told me I did not suit etc. I have just received a long letter from him in which he had all sorts of things to say about the book and makes a clean confession as to the mistake that he made testifying beyond all expression in favor of my work at X———— and expressing the feeling that my book has in it a benediction for every christian minister. In some respects it is the most surprising letter I ever received. I will show it to you later."

The letter reads as follows:

"DEAR FRIEND,—We have been greatly pleased by the perusal of your book, "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years"—especially as it describes your very peculiar experience at D————; for the good work done by you here is still witnessed to in its effects and remembered with gratitude by many.

"I shall never forget your patience with our coldness and final triumph over it. . . But the stirring stories of your *evangelistic* labors and success appeal to me with peculiar force. I wish that every minister of the Gospel—especially the younger men—might feel the pressure of such testimony to the power of divine grace as your record renders. Intellectualism and formalism are the baleful liabilities of our profession now. The churches are suffering because of the lack of spirituality.

"The story of your life will revive their faith in the reality and simplicity of the 'power of God unto salvation'.

"With kind regards."

Dr. Hatcher wrote a kindly reply, closing as follows:

"Your letter did me good in many ways and kindled in me a love for you which I am sure will not die in this world nor in the other. You have had a long stay at D———— and I have no doubt you have done much good."

Digitized by Google

These pages will not permit copious extracts from his new book, but a few other selections are made in order that the reader may form an idea of the style in which the volume is written.

In his chapter on "Sitting in the Ashes" he tells of the woe and desolation that broke upon his town of Manchester at the surrender of Lee and the fall of the Southern Confederacy. He then paints the picture of the Southern army and the two Northern armies passing through Manchester on their way home for disbanding and then he adds:

"But I saw another sight, in connection with Richmond's fall, which I confess thrilled me a thousand times more than all the glory of all the victorious armies of the republic. It was a spectacle that broke upon me most unexpectedly; it came while the heavens were black with storm and the streets were wild with flooding rains.

"What I saw was a horseman. His steed was bespattered with mud and his head hung down as if worn by long traveling The horseman sat his horse like a master; his face was ridged with self-respecting griefs; his garments were worn in the service and stained with travel; his hat was slouched and spotted with mud and only another unknown horseman rode with him, as if for company and for love. Even in the fleeting moment of his passing by my gate I was awed by his incomparable dignity. His majestic composure, his rectitude and his sorrow were so wrought and blended into his visage, and were so beautiful and impressive to my eyes, that I fell into violent weeping. To me there was only one where this one was; there could be only one that day and that one was still my own revered and cherished leader, stainless in honor, resplendent and immortal even in defeat, my own, my peerless chieftain, Robert E. Lee.

"In that lone way, in the midst of rain and mire, with no crowds to hail him, with no resounding shouts to welcome him, with no banners flapping about him, did he come back from disastrous war. But Ah; we did not know. Conquered and solitary he was, but yet he wore invisible badges of victory; he carried spoils of conquest and honor which could never fail and in every step of his sad moving he was marching forward to take his place in the palace courts of universal fame."

Digitized by Google

As an example of a different type of literature is the following selection from his chapter on "Shreds of a Trans-atlantic Outing." When he went across the sea he carried in his pocket "a formidable letter of introduction" to a Mr. John C. Graham of Glasgow, Scotland. He called at Mr. Graham's residence upon landing at Glasgow, but the gentleman was out of the city. Dr. Hatcher arrived again at Glasgow on the day before he was to take the boat on his return to America. He remembered Mr. Graham's name and his letter of introduction and so he set forth in search of the Scotch stranger.

"It turned out that Mr. Graham was a prominent railroad officer and his office was within the precincts of the Glasgow station of that road. To attempt to find him would be about equal to undertaking to find a house in a town of a thousand people without any special direction. I was directed this way, then that way, then another way, then around somewhere, then back again, until I was far more concerned as to whether I would ever find my way out than I was whether I would find Mr. Graham.

"Finally I struck a man in working clothes who had a heart, also a head. He informed me that he would take me straight to Mr. Graham's office. In vain I fumbled in my pocket for that letter which was to give me my character, and ambled along as if going to the slaughter pen, or some other place of relief. After running me a race amid cars, passages, stairways and short turns, he jerked open a door and said, 'Mr. Graham, a gentleman wishes to see you' and shot out, as much as to say that his part was done and he was determined not to witness the meeting. I stopped 'framed in the door' according to the tiresome phrase of the day, quite tired myself.

"A gentleman, immense in frame and with a head colossal, and, in part, barren of its locks, threw up his golden rimmed spectacles to the top of his head, whirled suddenly in his revolving chair towards me and fixed two large and magnificent eyes upon me. His gaze was keen enough to clip the buttons on my clothes and uncover me for inspection and yet behind it there was something gracious as seen in the distance.

"Excuse me, Mr. Graham, let not my presence alarm you. I do not come to ask for anything; not that I have much, but I am an American and I have my return ticket and enough

Digitized by Google

to get me on the boat. A friend of yourself in Richmond, Va., was much set on my shaking your hand and presenting his compliments and, to show you that you were not being imposed upon, gave me a good character, sketched with his own pen—an excellent letter, indeed, which I discovered two or three minutes ago that I had lost. I am here for nothing on the earth, except to shake your hand, that I may tell Mr. Samuel C. Clopton that I had seen you and had grasped your hand; if now you are willing to shake my hand we will have the ceremony at once and close the exercises.'

"Let me add, however, that in the event you decline to have the hand-shake I shall not take it ill; I have lived this long without shaking hands with you and I think that by hard pulling I might make the rest of the trip even though deprived of that privilege.".

" 'I wish to say to you Sir' he said in loud tones, "I hardly find myself in a humor to shake your hand. You have not treated me with that respect to which, I think, a friend of Dr. Clopton's is entitled. You tell me that you are to take the American steamer tomorrow afternoon. You have so schemed Sir as to make it impossible for me to give you an adequate taste of old Scotia's hospitality. Where is your luggage? . . . I will take you to Hamilton Palace; I will have some gentleman to come in and take dinner with you tonight; I will notify my pastor that you will preach for us tonight and I, with my family, will take you down to Greenoch tomorrow evening and see you on your steamer. Poor treatment, I admit, but you are to blame for its not being better."

As an example of some of the "evangelistic" pictures in the book may be mentioned the following The scene was in Petersburg, Va.:

"It was during this pastorate, while exceedingly busy in my study one day, I heard a gentle rap at my door and upon opening it I found one of my little Sunday-School girls. Her presence surprised me, for it was a week-day and I wondered that she was not at school. I asked her how it was that she had found time to come to see me.

" 'Oh doctor' she said 'I came to bring you good news. This morning, while praying in my room, I found the Saviour, and mother was so happy about it that she told me that I might stay away from school and come down and tell you all about

Digitized by Google

it.' I recall even now the radiant light upon her face and the joyous sincerity with which she told her story. It was better than a book on theology to mark the glow of religious rapture upon her face. Her out-spoken experiences bespoke the living Christ. We had a brief prayer of thanksgiving and she indicated that her visit was at an end. I bade her good-bye saying that I would see her that night, for we were holding revival services at the time. She made no reply and I repeated that I would see her that night.

" 'Not to-night' she said, and her face took on a sudden shadow.

" 'Not coming?' I said with unintentional cruelty. 'Do you not desire to come to the meetings?' I saw the lines of suffering on her face and her lip quivered.

" 'Oh, yes, indeed; I would like above everything to be here to-night' she said 'but I cannot come. This morning after breakfast I asked mother if I might go across the street and ask a lady to come with us to church to-night. I told her that I had been converted and told her about the meeting and asked her to come with us to-night. She told me that she would come, but she was afraid to leave her baby with the nurse and I said that if she would come to the meeting I would stay with the nurse and help take care of the baby.'

"The way she said it went to my heart. It told of her childish ardor and her genuine zeal and of the Christ-like self-denial already in her heart. She did not know that she had done a brave and lofty deed, but I knew it and I looked upon her with wonder and with love as she shook hands and flittered out of my office.

"That night the house was crowded and I delivered a brief sermon at the close of which I invited inquirers to come forward. The front pews were filled with inquirers and among them a lady in mourning and deeply veiled. Approaching her I expressed pleasure that she had come and a desire to help her. She thanked me in a quiet and candid voice and told me not to concern myself about her, adding that she was the lady that little Alice Robertson had told me about.

" 'Let me tell you' she said 'that for the first time in all my life my heart is full of religious peace to-night. When Alice came over this morning and told me about her conversion it greatly impressed me and when she offered to stay and care for my baby I realy felt that God had sent her and before I came to-night I knew that my little friend had led me to sal-

Digitized by Google

vation. After the meeting is over I will need you to talk about my future but you ought to go now and give the help to others which Alice brought to me to-day.'

"My duties were driving me at a furious rate and, except a few words which I had with the lady that night, I knew nothing more of her until sometime after that I was told her husband was sick and expressed a wish to see me. I went of course and found him in bed. I had not seen him before but heard that he was a wholesale liquor-merchant and utterly regardless of religion. After greeting him I began to question him about his sickness but he cut me short. 'Never mind about my sickness' he said brusquely and yet with feeling, 'I have deeper troubles than any sickness could bring. Since that little Robertson girl got into my house the other day things have gone all awry. My wife is quite another woman and I see plainly enough that if I am to live with her I must be another man; but how can I? Can there be hope for such a man? It does not look that way to me. I am sick with my trouble and I thought maybe it was my business. I hobbled into my buggy yesterday and drove to the store and told my partner that I would never come into that house again; that the business I would leave to him and he could do what he pleased with it; that as for my part I would never sell another drop of whiskey if my family had to starve for it. I little know what will come of my action, but I am done with whiskey for evermore. I am glad of my decision but it does not give me peace and I thought you could help me.'

"Truly he was a fit subject for the gospel and I need not tell you that in a little while he was another man and he has been ever since. It was not long afterwards when he entered the membership of my church. We needed no witness to tell that he and his wife had been converted. The proofs of it were written all over their lives and they were open letters read of all men wherever they went. For a time he was a man without a job and without an income, but business pursued him, threw its gates open to him and prospered him at every step.

"He and his wife are still living. Almost boundless prosperity has inriched his path. He has become a leader among men, a great Bible teacher, a liberal giver, a champion of every great enterprise and one of the truest and most devoted friends that God has ever given me. He has reared a large family and many of his children are busy and efficient in the service of the Lord. Simon Seward—that is his name and he

Digitized by Google

and his wife walk humbly before the Lord and delight in his service and law. Little Alice did it. In her own bright and loving fashion she let her light shine and they saw it afar and followed it and it led them into the Kingdom."

His next letter to me closes by saying, "I hope to do much in writing up my reminiscent stories. Send me the list of those we made out of those to write." This means still another book which he is writing,—a book of short stories, gleaned entirely from his own experience, and which he had used as effective illustrations in his sermons and addresses. There is a passage of scripture that reads, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." He had lived a long life of service for others and now in his last days he was beginning to reap a reward. His cares were many even to the end and yet they were often drowned in the happy current of grateful words about his book and his life that were ever flowing to him through his mail and his conversations. He would come in from his trips, and his piles of letters, while bringing him varied appeals and bothers, would also pour their sunlight upon his heart. He rejoiced to note that through his book he was still preaching to others and possibly his soul was stirred by the thought that when he had passed away his book would continue its work. Dr. C. H. Dodd wrote him a delightful letter about his book "Along the Trail, etc.," and in reply he writes to him:

"My beloved friend,—You over-do it decidedly but it is a holy type of exaggeration pardonable in my sight, if not in the sight of heaven. Your favorable estimate of my book is food for a somewhat—invalid author's pride. I am glad to have your praise for my book and I charge it up to that friendly kindness of yours which has done so much to cheer and gladden me in the past.

"Very Sincerely,

"W. E. Hatcher."

A minister from Illinois writes:

"I read pages from your 'John Jasper' in my pulpit and then my son did the same in his. He has the finest church in Mil-

Digitized by Google

waukee. . . How he and his wealthy congregation did enjoy that book."

"Say, but that chapter on 'The Incomparable Jeff' is a classic" writes Dr. Arthur Jones concerning his new book.

The loving messages that kept trickling in through the mails were good medicine to him. "You have been an incalculable blessing to thousands", writes Dr. E. Y. Mullins, on July 11th, "and will be, I believe, to the last moment of your life,—which may the Lord defer a long time." Among the letters that came to him was one from his friend, Rev. Andrew Broaddus of Caroline County, telling him of the great help that the book had brought him and of his love for the author. In reply Dr Hatcher writes:

"I found my eyes bedewed with tears as I read your affectionate letter. I have been drawing sweetness from the two Broadduses for a long time. Your father gave me great pride in giving me such an ardent friendship; Luther was wrought into my soul and his image lives in my memory today; and as for you and Julian how could I ever tell you of the freedom, the intimacy, the joy of my companionship with you and I am simple enough to believe that the sweetest drop which ever fell from my cup dropped from your letter as I read it this morning. So far as I can judge the chief care about my book is as to the measure of comfort and inspiration it may give to others. I will respect the book more because it did you good.

"I find my heart set on coming, if possible, to the Hermon. Save the meanest little room that you have in the house for me and if the Lord will allow me I will be there.

"Give my love to the family in overflowing measures and tell Gay and Kirk to keep the music of the Fork Union bugle rolling over the hills and plains of Caroline."

In reply to Dr. E. Y. Mullins' letter he writes:

"I have just received your exceedingly spicy and piquant letter. I have just one remark that I will make in reply to it—it is simply unanswerably good. But there is a thing I would like to do. I find myself disposed to put your father 'No. 1' and you 'No. 2' and so I write to ask your father's address that

Digitized by Google

I may send him a copy of my new book. If I have any doubt as to your capacity to enjoy my book I give your father credit for having just that kind of genius and gumption that will make him like my book.

"Send me his address and I will send him my book as a token of my appreciation of him as your father and in the hope that it will cheer and prove companionable to him in his convalescent days."

"You always gird and stimulate me" writes a pastor. "I love you with all of a son's strong devotion. In my bitter grief your book has been a blessing."

Dr. M. L. Wood of Huntington, W. Va., writes on July 19th:

"I have laughed and cried with you 'Along the Trail of the Friendly Years', and have wished and resolved many things with you along the delghtful journey. I often think back to the time when, in the beginning of the eighties, my own path crossed that trail. That you then had a kind word for the green and awkward country lad, all unprepared for College work, has had a vast amount to do with what has been worth while in the after years of his work. . . Now that you wear on your frosted locks the crown of a strong life, nobly spent in self-sacrificing service, I wish that I might add at least a rose-leaf to the chaplet that shall wreath the crown; not that I could enrich the votive offering, but merely share in the honor and happiness of putting it in its worthy place. I love you very much and count you one of God's best gifts to the cause as represented by the Baptist people. I trust you will pardon me for the liberty I have taken to write thus, but I wanted to say this much at least before heavenly music dulled your ears to earthly voices."

His chief attention at this time was given to the Seminary campaign in Virginia. Through his several canvassers he sought to cover the state and by his weekly jottings, in the Herald he sought to stimulate the movement. His burdens were many, but there seemed to be ever a song in his heart and a growing light upon his path.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XLII

1910—1911

GAMES WITH THE GRANDCHILDREN. CONTINUED TRIBUTES TO HIS BOOK. INTEREST IN PEOPLE. CAUGHT IN A HOTEL FIRE. BLUEFIELD.

When he would run into Careby from his trips, during this Summer season, he would find himself busier than when he was out upon the highway. Academy matters were always waiting to crowd him with their questions and appeals. His mail had to be answered and his stenographer would appear on the Careby hill a few minutes after his arrival. But in the rush the grandchildren generally occupied the center of the stage. They were now at a good age for "games" and many were the contests which he had with them. After a heavy drive with his stenographer, or after several straining conferences in his office with different visitors, he would call out "Virginia!" or "William!" or "Katherine!" and when he heard their answer he would call out, "Quoits!" or "Dominoes!" It was interesting to watch him at a game of dominoes with one of the children. There were really *two* children playing when he was one of the players. He became utterly lost to the outside world in the contest and would work with might and main to beat. He would groan out his disappointments when he would lose and shout his elation when he would win, and through it all he maintained a genial, kindly manner.

He would not allow the game to drag, but would cry out in mock fierceness "Go on; go on," when his opponent would be slow in playing. "Oh, I am a ruined man" he would exclaim

Digitized by Google

when some play would go against him. Again he would say. "Well, Brother Hatcher has hopes". "Hurrah for Bruder Hatcher!" he would call out when a new turn would come in his favor and thus he would keep up a running fire of comment—of which he almost appeared unconscious, so absorbed was he in the contest.

One day Katherine saw him and Virginia engaged in a game of dominoes. Grandfather's "carryings-on" in the game amused her. With knitted brow and eager manner he was trying hard to beat and was running a regular fusillade of ejaculations about the game. Katherine decided that she would take down on paper these ejaculations. She knew how much Edith and Elizabeth at Bryn Mawr would enjoy it and in a spirit of fun she picked up pencil and paper and slyly jotted down Grandfather's comments just as they came from his lips. This particular incident occured during the winter when Katherine and Virginia were staying at Careby, but the exclamations give a picture of how Grandfather "kept things lively" in his games,—whether in Summer or Winter.

The dashes indicate the pauses between the comments, though there were not many seconds in which he was not stirring up the contest with some remark.

His outbursts were as follows:

"She wont hollow like I will.

"Oh, brother Hatcher, I am sorry for you. Go on with blank—one. Go on.

"Brother Hatcher—busted—Ten, ten, ten; go on; let me see, Oh, yes; you have got to do some playing, go on I dont believe I could if my life depended on it.

"I never desired any more than that. Go on. Get away from her. This girl has to stop every time you crook your neck—Go on, you are fifteen, I am nothing on the top of the ground.

"I am nothing and am getting worse. Go on here. Well I believe the time has come for me to be heard from.

"Great Caesar, you are just ruining me. Let me see; now that is a six-four-let me see, let me see—six, six, six six, one,

Digitized by Google

two, three, four, one, two, four, one. Great Caesar, there is nothing to play. I will play that any way, forty-four, fifty-five—you did that just because your mother was in here,—you did not get double blank—blank, go on, go.

"That's five for you. Go on. You got five, I did'nt . Go on—you are fifteen—you are ten, I am nothing on the top of the ground—Dedle, dedle de, de, de. Stop; look here where did you knock that man?—All I get over, this time, I'll take off you. Oh, brother Hatcher you are getting on beautifully—I'll put it that way if it costs me a bushel of snaps,—Ten for me—some men are gone. Go on, go on—now this is a struggle—If you get over four hundred I'll give you a quarter. Go on, I got spoilt, I thought you would give me ten—well that was so nice in you—beautiful, beautiful—ten, ten, ten,ten—well I got twenty—at that rate you will lay me in the dust. Gone to pieces in his calapication—blank—one, two, three, four. I'll give you four—go on—four, four, four, four, four,—one, two—go on with your blank.

"Let me see what would you do? Where did that go?—that's twenty, 20, 20, 20—hello—go on. I wish you would play some time; that's what I wish—well I put it that way—Great Ceasar—wait here—let me see—how many have you got?—can you play a five? one six—two six—three six—five for Bruder— twenty for Bruder—twenty for Bruder—twenty-five for Bruder—twenty five for Bruder—twenty-five for Bruder—twenty five for Bruder—twenty-five for Bruder—blankee for Bruder—how many have you got? Let me see what I can do?—one two—one, two, three, four,—hello twenty-five, go on—Great Caesar, hello—Let me see what you have got—four. I'll get some of the big one's off. That is twenty-three I got off—how much did I get before five, five, five, let me see—five—that is ten for Brother Hatcher. I wish you would get some more. Ten for Brother Hatcher—Twenty for Brother Hatcher—that's five for you."

At the end of this Katherine who took it down wrote "Grandfather said all of this. Virginia didn't say any."

"You have just passed the 76th milestone" writes Dr. I. B. Lake "I lift my heart in thanksgiving to the good Lord that you are still permitted to walk along the trail doing this work."

Regarding the title which he had chosen for his book, Dr. McGlothlin of the Seminary wrote him, "The name is an

Digitized by Google

inspiration and will have for me perpetual value as a suggestion of the right attitude towards life's experiences."

He writes to Rev. Andrew Broadus:

"My prayer is that you may live many years, though there is one reason why I would like to outlive you and that is that I might attend your funeral and tell the world what I think of you."

"I picked up a fine boy for the Academy" he writes "and also picked up fifty dollars to help me take care of a poor boy."

"One of the saddest thoughts that I have is that you are growing old" writes Rev. R. F. Treadway of Arkansas. . . In this world you will never know how greatly I admire you and how much I love you. Perhaps in eternity I can make you know more of it."

One brother lays the blame for a headache at his door:

"I have just read your last book, 'Along the Trail of the Friendly Years'. . I read until nearly one o'clock at night when wife said, 'You must go to bed' and I had to desist, but I began it again in the morning somewhere about four or five o'clock with the result which you are responsible for,—a feeling of fatigue accompanied with some headache. . . I wish to thank you with all my heart for the comfort and joy which this book has given me."

"What a great mass of good you have done in your life" writes Dr. H. F. Colby of Dayton. "And how modestly you have only hinted at it while you have pictured so graphically the scenes and people you have met. We love you very much in Dayton."

"I must work while it is day; for the night cometh"; that was the motto which during these days seemed ever sounding in his soul. On October 6th, he writes me:

"Just back from Lynchburg. The Almond wedding went off with a high and graceful bang.

Digitized by Google

FORK UNION MILITARY ACADEMY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"I expect to end my Seminary work at General Association. After that ————; Well, I am still dedicating; also my fame as a revivalist shows vital signs. Hollins is after me and North Carolina also. I must work, for the night cometh.

"As to Baltimore . . . . . I sicken to see you and yours. Words cannot tell out my yearning after you."

A young preacher in Indiana, after telling of how he had devoured the book, closed by saying: "God bless you not only for this recent goodness but for what you were to me in my student days—unacknowledged until now."

"Why do you go so much" said his wife to him one day as he was preparing to leave Careby on one of his trips. "Why not stay here at Careby? We have enough and can easily get along and you will find it not so heavy on you."

Quickly he replied, "I would rather see souls saved than to do anything else on the earth". Dr. Landrum called him "a crowned king of workers". "We are having a fierce rumpus here between our H———— and our C———— [at the Academy]" he writes. "But it will be over in a thousand years and so I will let it go by and see you at the end of the millennium."

He visited us in Baltimore, spoke before our State convention and in a day or so was gone. He wrote a few days later:

"I am having solitude in blocks and it makes me quite conceited that I am such delightful company for Brer Hatcher. He tells me he enjoys my society very much except I work so much that he cannot see much of me. He was always foolish about wanting so much."

A young minister Rev. Mosby Seay, who spent a week with him at Careby, says it was one of the richest experiences of his life to read in his hearing the new book "Along the Trail".

"I thought" says he "that the 'asides' he gave me as I read

Digitized by Google

it as fine as the book itself and I regarded it a pity he did not incorporate them."

The following letter to Rev. J. E. Bailey of Saluda, S. C., shows how he would seek by a letter to cheer a young pastor:

"Your letter is glory itself. Your story of the Red Bank building programme is a poem. It positively charmed me. I rejoice that the hoary obstacles which have blocked your track are melting away and that your people are massing solidly for the work. . . . .

"The God of the brave is with you. Stand to your colors and you will soon see the day of victory.

"Oh, it will be glory enough if I can be on hand on that great and proud day in your life. I am hoping that the Lord will let me see that house of the Lord happily done.

"I am now closing up my campaign for the Seminary. It has been a most engaging and satisfying task and I have found it a fountain of life. We set out to get $60,000 and I am sure that we are going beyond $80,000.

"How is that for old Virginia?

"I find myself ready to shout over the growth of your town. You intoxicate me with enthusiasm by the way you blow the Saluda trumpet."

His wife writes to one of the children, "Your father gets some letters about his book nearly every day."

Among these letters was the following from a friend whom he greatly loved,—Dr. R. H. Hudnall of Blacksburg:

"I have just laid aside the most interesting book I have ever read in my life—your 'Along the Trail of the Friendly Years'. I hardly know how to characterize it, or what to say of its style. There was no one who could write as Addison did and so we name his style Addisonian; so there was a Johnsonese, a Carlyle and a Macaulayian style and so there is a Hatcherian style. . . You are inimitable and your strong personality is felt throughout. . . ."

Next Spring at Philadelphia the Baptists of the world were to meet in the Baptist World Alliance. This gathering of

Digitized by Google

the Baptist hosts was scheduled to occur every five years. Dr. John Clifford of England was president and at the next meeting America is to have the honor of naming the new president. Who will he be? Dr. Albion W. Small of the Chicago University writes on November 5th in the Chicago Standard regarding the presidency, closing with these words:

"As a sign of our fraternity and as an exhibit of the manner of man whom all American Baptists delight to honor I propose that we select by acclamation Dr. William E. Hatcher."

Dr. L. A. Crandall of Minneapolis followed with a brief statement closing with the words: "it seems evident that he intended to nominate everybody's friend, Dr. William E. Hatcher, as the next president of the Baptist World Alliance. I hasten to second that nomination with the understanding that Doctor Hatcher shall at once proceed to write us another book as charming as 'Along the Trail of the Friendly years.' ".

There was much talk of his election to the position but he laughed the idea out of court. He remarked that the new president would be elected to serve five years and that he was too near his end to undertake such a work for a five-year period. This was his feeling though of course he appreciated profoundly the kindness of his honored friends in suggesting his name.

He went to Hollins Institute to aid Dr. George B. Taylor in meetings and near the end of the meetings he writes:

"Sunday night; Great time tonight. A mighty meeting. Many Hollins girls came and several men of families."

Again he writes:

"The X———— incident [at Fork Union] is at fever heat, but I am too busy and feeble to be excited."

A pastor who delivered a prominent discourse at the General Association in Roanoke wrote him after the Association that while he was preparing the discourse he had the thought, "I wonder what Dr. Hatcher will think of that." "Yes I did" he writes "I knew you would be there and that I would have no more sympathetic listener and with all your loving sympathy

Digitized by Google

I knew you would listen with sharp discrimination." At the Academy he conducted the service on Thanksgiving Day and at the close the Academy cadets presented to him a silver loving cup. "It pleased him very much" writes his wife. "It was a delicate way to express their love."

It might be mentioned at this point that in his business dealings he seemed to have not merely a conscience for fairness but also a heart for the merchant. He scorned to higgle about the price and seemed ever anxious that the other party should come out of the transaction in good shape. Even the Italian fruit dealers at the depot where he would take the train for Fork Union would smile, and jump about with a new step, when Dr. Hatcher would approach, for he seemed to be interested in them in such a kindly fashion and with nearly every purchase there was a striking sentence that they would remember him by.

When he had his office at the College during his work for that institution, he was often a passenger on the Broad Street car line and it was very noticeable how the faces of the conductors would light up when they approached him for the fare or when they would help him on the car. They all not only knew him but acted as if they thought he was their kind, good friend and he nearly always punctured them with a breezy bright word. It was on a Richmond Street car that he found one day a young man from the mountains acting as conductor. He told him that he was born for higher work and that young man is one of the useful pastors in Texas today.

A gentleman who in those days was a student at the College says; "I remained at College during the holidays when nearly all the other students were away and one day Dr. Hatcher, noticing how lonely I seemed to be said, 'Here take this dollar and go and have an outing and a good time.' "

Mr. W. C. Rowland the Philadelphia merchant with whom Dr. Hatcher had large business dealings every year in connection with the uniforms for the Academy wrote, "I have always felt that he was my brother; he was always kind to me

Digitized by Google

and I shall always feel grateful that. . .it was my privilege to call him friend."

He went one day up into Powhatan county with his friend R. H. Winfree to attend a meeting. The meeting proved to be invisible but on their return they stopped on the road at Peterville to feed their horse. They sat down and soon Dr. Hatcher became engaged in a conversation with an old negro who was standing near and who seemed to be very feeble and infirm.

Soon Dr. Hatcher said to the old man, "Are you a christian?" "No sar; I iz not. I ain' nev'r bin caus' I nev'r cu'd have dat 'speriunce. Dey tel' me yer got ter have de 'speriunce; I hear de others say dey dun got it but I ain' had it."

Mr. Winfree in telling about the incident said that Dr. Hatcher then proceeded to tell the gospel story to the old negro who listened intently. He explained in simple language how we were saved, not by having some wonderful experience, but by trusting in Christ. Mr. Winfree said a few months after that he heard that the old man died and in his last moments said, "I don' kno 'bout de speriunce but I am trustin' jes' lek dat preacher tol' me dat day at Peterville."

The Doctor in Florida who treated his sprained thumb a few months before his death wrote his pastor, Dr. Wildman, telling him of what a blessing his contact with Dr. Hatcher in his professional dealings with him had been.

"For the past twenty years or more" writes Mr. Hunt Hargrave, a dearly loved friend, "you have been an inspiration to me and if I am of any account in the religious world much is due to my association with you."

He brought to an end his work for the Seminary campaign. After expressing his appreciation of his labors Dr. Mullins added, "I can never express to you sufficiently my appreciation of all that you have been to me personally and to the Seminary."

Digitized by Google

"Who thinks of William E. Hatcher" says the Herald "as an old man. He was never more abundant in labors and enjoys them all."

His daughter Orie had asked him to write her what his needs for the winter were and in reply he wrote:

"As for the matter of my needs for the wintry weather I am too stupid to speak with effect. I do not know what I need and cannot say that I need anything. My needs seem dumb and do not cry out. Meet me in Baltimore and tutor me as to what I ought to have but have no concern about me. . . ."

A letter came from China, from Rev. R. E. Chambers, a missionary in that country, saying that at a special meeting of Chinese girls he had told one of the stories of his book, "Along the Trail of the Friendly Years." He writes:

"I related the incident as nearly as I could in a literal translation of your own words. It would have done your own heart good to see how it stirred the audience of more than 100 girls. I am satisfied that quite a number of these who were baptized two weeks later were to a considerable extent influenced by the story. I then prepared it for publication in the True Light monthly. Mr. Cheung Kaam Ue, the Chinese assistant editor, pronounced it excellent and tears were in his eyes more than once while I was dictating the story to him. I feel that you will enjoy knowing that the influence of your work and little Alice's love for souls is being felt on this side of the globe. I expect to translate several other incidents from the book."

The pleasant tenor of his life was rudely broken by his experience on December 15th at Manassas. While he was asleep in the hotel fire was discovered in the building and he was suddenly awakened by the banging of doors and the inrush of smoke.

"It was no cheerful fate," he writes, "to be tumbled out into the snow under the reluctant twilight, half-clad and pushed hither and thither by a wild and unthinking crowd. . . . .

Digitized by Google

"But somehow help always comes and this time it came in the manly form and the quick recognition of a former honored student at Richmond College,—Mr. Sinclair, now a young lawyer at Manassas, who quickly found me a guide and hustled me away to his father's house. It was kindness indeed and I was picking my way along the slippery paths when a sleigh came singing by and behold it had as its sole occupant another Richmond College boy,—he a lawyer also—Robert Hutchison by name, who, with imperious kindness, drew me to his side and at blinding speed whirled me away to the door of one of the most lovable of all the friends of earth, Westwood Hutchison and in a few more seconds I was in his cosy mansion with every member of the family acting as my servant and racking me to the point of torture to find what they could do for me.

"Oh this world is fine,—filled up with love and light and hope and help and one might feel that it is well to stay here forever and be happy if there were no better place. In a little while the scene of the fire, the strain of the flight and the lurid horror of the flames were all gone and I was taking breakfast peacefully and with zest in the home of the Hutchisons."

He lost his valise and his two best suits at the fire, but he said, "I am living and I defy the earth to prevent me from being grateful." He had the joy of taking part in the celebration of the fiftieth marriage anniversary of Dr. and Mrs. I. B. Lake—friends greatly beloved—at Upperville, Va.

A mother whose son Mortimer he had helped at the Academy writes him:

"Oh, Dr. Hatcher, you have done great good in your life; you have brought peace and comfort to hundreds of lives and to no hearts have you brought greater joy than to mine and to Mortimer's."

He and his wife spent the Christmas holidays with his three daughters Orie, Edith and Elizabeth at Bryn Mawr, and a very happy season it was for him. He stopped with us in Baltimore for a few days. While he was at Bryn Mawr his Chinese boy, Ah Fong, paid him a visit,—running down from New York where he was a student at Columbia College. Ah Fong writes, "When he saw me, he said, 'Well, Ah Fong, it does my heart

Digitized by Google

good to see you again. So you are at Columbia, I know you are of the right stuff.' "

He had sent out post card greetings to some of his friends,—among them to Dr. C. T. Herndon who replied:

"That you, my father, should think of me and write with your own, dear hand such a sweet message touches me more deeply than I can tell you. . .You must take care of yourself for those who love you. . . I thank God for every remembrance of you. Last night Skinner and I were talking over the phone of our admiration and love for you."

None of the family were at Careby but he hastens thither where he writes:

"I got home last evening just before seven. I found rain, mud and darkness waiting for me. But my ever faithful Stephens brought me to Careby at a clipping rate. My room was warm and full of light and soon hot coffee and batter bread made me forget that I had had no dinner that was worthy of respectful mention. That night I slept the sleep of the dilapidated. Indeed I am still working off my fatigues.

[I send this blot free]

"I am writing nothing on my book. Indeed I am mixing indolence with idleness in equal proportions."

Huntington, West Virginia, next claimed him for meetings.

From that point he writes me:

"Wood has almost punctured me to the point of a book on 'Character Sermons'. I may come to it—if I do not come to my end too soon for that. . . . . I never enjoyed preaching more in my life."

To his friend, Dr. E. B. Bryan, President of Colgate University, he sent the following hilarious letter:

"Your letter is worth its weight six times in diamonds. I found it awaiting me on my return from Huntington, W. Va., where I held a glorious meeting. I ran in to lay up for repairs

Digitized by Google

for a brief while and I have other engagements pulling at my throat.

"I am working at another book—except that I am not; full half of the work is done and the other half lags because of my absence and also because of the fascination of indolence.

"I am getting great accounts of you and Colgate. They tell me how splendidly you are doing and I knew you would. Your invitation for me to come—come not for toil but for love—come to revel in your hospitality—is distracting; I would like to see you in your new glories, see your wife, see your two girls and that jewel of your heart and mine, one Julian. Maybe I will come some time but I must wait to see.

"You rather discount yourself in my judgment, but not in my feelings to write so ravingly about my book. If I could write it over again, I would put you and Arthur Jones and "Powl" in a chapter to yourselves and head it, 'My Best Chapter.'

"It is equally fanatical and ill-conceived on your part to be throwing your hat in the air over the proposition to make me President of the Baptist World's Alliance. Dr. Small of the University of Chicago started that gracious fable. I have vanity enough to send a few pioneer thoughts out on the hill tops to bring back reports as to what an honor it would be to me if they did make me president. I also send my judgment along to keep my thoughts from making fools of themselves and require them to tell me there is nothing in it.

"It was kind of the University of Chicago to propose it and probably a greater kindness in those—that innumerable multitude who saw nothing in it—to sit still and be silent.

"The weight of seventy six years bends one's shoulders out of shape and makes him unsuitable for carrying the burden of great honors which being interperted means that I am not the man.

"You honored me by speaking of the Moores. God bless the boys. Albert was my first convert at Hamilton and he and Robert had a great dinner and invited me and several other boys to the frolic. Do give my love to them; quarrel with Prof. Jones continually for my sake. Tell Dr. Maynard that he and I and a few other Democrats now have the American Republic in charge and the country is safe.

"But my pen runs riot and I must put on my curb

"Ever and undyingly yours."

Digitized by Google

He sends the following letter back to the Huntington pastor, Rev. M. L. Wood.

"My Dear Brer Wood,—I made a clean schedule run for home—lost no time, sleep was taken in small doses, Virginia greeted me with genial sunlight and Careby Hall, though destitute of every member of my tribe, was warm and cheery in its welcome.

"I thought that rest awaited me, but all the bothers of the Academy and bundles of insistent letters, also my rebellious big toe, sprang on me and tore me up.

"But I am living—Mark that! I miss Huntington grievously. I miss *you*—your sober kindness and your genial helpful company. You build me up outside and in. I miss Mrs. M. L. W———— very much I miss her. Her mercies were renewed to me every morning in cordial treatment—also in cakes and potatoes. Miriam invigorated me with her enthusiasm as a student and her adoring love of her father. John commanded my respect by his early rising, his devotion to his school and his interest in the meeting. As for my own boy—the matchless lovely Mathew I mourn for him. I need him now; send him to me by express. I love him as my jewel of a boy. Tell him he must come on and be my boy.

"But I am working today for a new church having been in a committee on plans for hours. I expect to be in Bluefield for next Sunday. Do tell me things.

"Yours very much in love."

He writes to his wife on February 1st from Fork Union:

"I am over-run with company at all times and of all sorts. This I do not mind as it is what I live for."

From Bluefield, W. Va., where he is holding meetings he, writes on February 6th:

"My deep grief is that I do not seem to have as much converting power as I had in my earlier days. This may be owing to general conditions in part at least, but I charge it up against myself and groan over it. But I do not forget the grace that keeps me alive and gives me a chance and strength to work at all. . . .

Digitized by Google

"My eyes—or rather my eye—gives me trouble and keeps me from reading and makes it hard for me to write. I hope for a stenographer in a day or two.

"I judge the ———— folly is over but I almost think my work with the Academy is coming to an end."

Ocasionally his Academy burdens—in connection with the many other loads that he was carrying—would grow so heavy and grievous that he would think that he could not stand up under them any longer and yet, though his shoulders would often ache, his heart would rebel when he would come to the point of actual surrender. Dr. E. Z. Simmons, of China, wrote him that his new book had helped him to be a better man and missionary. But let us look in upon him at Bluefield. Mrs. Mabie, the gifted wife of the Bluefield pastor thus gives a singularly interesting picture of Dr. Hatcher's visit:

"One cold Saturday night in February, 1911, Mrs Fleshman of Appomattox was coming to Bluefield to visit her sons. Dr. Hatcher was on the train, also bound for Bluefield. They were acquaintances of long standing and in conversation he said, 'I never dreaded a trip more in my life than this—to go to Bluefield —that wild mountain town in the dead of winter. I never have been to Bluefield and would not have gone now except that I felt so sorry for that poor Yankee boy who has come to live with the Southerners and if I can do anything in the world to cement the tie I will do it."

This was the young minister whom he had "introduced" to the Virginia Association and had in kindly, humorous fashion twitted with being a "Yankee". Mrs. Mabie's story thus continues:

"Mr. Mabie met him at the train with a machine and took him to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Easley, for years the first Baptist woman in Bluefield. She would not let any one have the honor of *homing* him while here, but during the two weeks of his stay he received seventeen invitations to dine out and accepted every one. . It was the happy privilege of Mr. Mabie and myself to share these invitations and visits with

Digitized by Google

him. . . . No housewife ever asked him for her board without receiving many-fold compensation for her labor in the *brilliant* after dinner talk of which Dr. Hatcher was the center and circumference,—in fact the *whole wheel* of brilliant turns and rapid movement. . . .

" . . . One bleak rainy morning he came to the parsonage and said, 'I am invited to dine with Cousin Tom Hawkins, will you please direct me to the place.' I replied, 'That is very simple,—three blocks east on Princeton Ave., and one block South on Bland Street'. He said, 'I don't know where Princeton Ave. is; I don't know where Bland St. is; I have no geographical sense; I never could find it in this world."

"I then caught the idea that he wished me to pilot him, so I hastily donned rubbers, coat and umbrella and we started out. We had not gone far when he said, 'Mrs. Mabie you have a husband who brings things to pass' and then he said many cheering, comforting, complimentary things that are always sweet to the ears of the wife of that much slandered personage—a man in public life. Dr. Hatcher never received a kindness nor act of courtesy without immediately returning it with interest; he never allowed himself to remain in debt to his friends, but kept them in bounteous store from the riches of his generous heart.

"Another rainy night I went with him from the car to Mrs. Easley's. I asked Dr. Hatcher: 'Why dont you ever tell us about your family?' Instantly he answered, 'That is an agreement we have; no one member is ever to speak of another member to strangers'. I replied 'How is the world ever to know that you are blessed with wife and children if you never mention them."

"He said, 'The world must find it out for itself.' But he did me the gracious honor of stepping over the barrier and he spoke tenderly and lovingly of each one. Upon another occasion he found that he had lost his handsome overcoat. He was much distressed and said, 'My girls gave me that coat; they certainly are very good to their old father."

"I told him one day that he was just the age of my father. He looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and said, 'Write to that father of yours and tell him that I have my opinion of a man who does not know any more than to sojourn in this world for more than seventy years. . . ."

Digitized by Google

"The distinguishing feature of Dr. Hatcher's meeting was his wonderful hold upon young men and boys. A row of boys on the front seat was the rule. He was simply irresistible; the boys could'nt stay away. Over fifty came into the church and many of them were youths just bursting into manhood and womanhood. Mr. Mabie always counted it the most blessed meeting of his ministry. . .

"I fear the ideas I have suggested are very meager and will not be of much value. The trouble is, Dr. Hatcher was too great for his friends to measure."

His correspondence in Bluefield was heavy. His stenographer at that place wrote me after his death that, if I desired it, she could write out again from her notes the letters which he had written while there. The following quotations are made from the letters which were sent me by this lady stenographer.

These letters by Dr. Hatcher read as if he felt he was moving near the border line and might be summoned into the other world at any moment and as if he desired, therefore, to make each one as cheering and as stimulating as possible. It is an interesting picture,—that of him, now in his seventy-seventh year, sending out letters in every direction, as if he stood upon some pleasant, eminence and was seeking to scatter comfort to his comrades and to hearten them for their task.

Let it be remembered that these, and other, letters which he wrote at Bluefield are available for use in this biography simply because the stenographer that wrote for him in Bluefield was thoughtful enough to send the copies. But he was a busy letter writer almost everywhere he went and these are merely specimens of the efforts at helpfulness which he was putting forth as he moved from point to point. To his old College friend, Dr. George W. Hyde of Missouri, he writes on February 7th:

"I feel that I want to tell you that our friendship which began in the stormy days of the Civil War has never lost its freshness. My faith in you has been unmeasured and my affection for you has grown, though our meetings have been infrequent and rarely allowed any close soul communion.

Digitized by Google

"Your quiet, unselfish life has commanded my admiration. I have had to walk so much in the glare of publicity that I have admired those who could be sober and thoughtful as you have always seemed to me to be.

"The fine things you said about my last book gave me uncommon pleasure. The book itself has had praise enough, even from the critics and the unsacred Press, and of course friends have been pleased to write me from everywhere about it. The book has struck a pace and has won a place in literature which I did not expect to find and of course it has quickened my intellectual pride.

"What, however, has pleased me far more is the note of comfort it has carried to many. I thank God that I could write a book of which it could be said that, while it was filled with personalities, it gave forth no voice of censure or reprobation. Of course we all have our scraps and strains in a world so discordant as this and some of our scars never heal without leaving the seams of the hard strifes, but I am sure that you and I could take leave of this world and wave back a cheerful good evening and forget the ills and wrongs which have hit us.

"I never meant to write reminiscences, but I never had that mental independence which held me inflexibly to my purpose. My publisher whipped my last book out of me and he and my preacher son are scourging me to the writing of another book, which I suppose will be ready for the press by the beginning of Summer. I write neither for fortune nor for fame, for I have learned to live without either and when my end comes I will need neither."

The new book, to which he refers in this letter has not yet been published. The Stories in it have been appearing in the Watchman—Examiner of New York and they are expected to be published in book from after the appearance of this biography.

A pastor in Virginia in inviting him to preach the dedicatory sermon for his new church had apparently asked him his charges for such a service. In his reply he says:

"I believe that I have never on any occasion named the amount that I was to receive for my services. That I most

Digitized by Google

cheerfully leave to the church feeling assured that whatever they do will be satisfactory to me. I will be far more anxious about what they will get out of me than I will be as what I will get out of them and on that score I have never had to complain of the treatment of my brethren who called me into their services."

To Rev. Dr. A. W. Lamar of Sioux City he writes:

I am at work now on another book, intended more especially for ministers, and designed more specifically to help them in their pulpit ministrations.

" . . . May God have a blessing for you in every sermon you preach."

To Rev. R. W. Sanders, of Greenville, S. C., he writes on the 16th the following letter which takes the reader "behind the scenes."

"I would be an ingrate if I did not drop you a word in response to your genial and refreshing card.

"I confess that my venture in the field of authorship was not under the nagging of the commercial spur. Of course this book, as yet, is on its first run and no word has passed between the publisher and myself as to its financial success. I judge that in due season it will bring something in the way of royalty.

"The school at Fork Union, supposed to be a mine of gold to me, has never yielded me one copper of income though it has offered it to me several times, but the school has needed my help so much that I felt it was more necessary, if not more blessed, to give than receive, and much of what little comes my way goes into the life of that school in the way of helping very gifted and ambitious, needy boys. That is one of the choicest investments of my last days and serves to keep my heart young and my hands busy. I speak with a candor, not very usual in a letter like this, but provoked in this case by the affectionate and frank tone of your letter.

"It must be glorious to live in Greenville and I rejoice that you have that pleasure in these days of your ripened prime. I read the Courier and my eyes kindle with friendly light whenever I hit upon anything from your pen."

Digitized by Google

The pastor at Clemson, S. C., was Rev. T. C. McCaul, one of his old Grace Street boys. He had mentioned him in a loving paragraph in the book, "Along the Trail etc." He received a letter from "Tom" and in reply he writes on the 10th:

"My Dear Tom,— . . . And so your eyes fell upon the brief paragraph in my new book in which is embalmed my love and memory of you. I am glad to have put it there and those who love me and read my book will know how I love you, but now that I have put it there, I want you to remember, my young lad, that you must live up to it. Solon said that he counted no man happy until he was dead, but I have counted you happy while you are living and have enshrined you in my book. I am glad the book gave you comfort and heartened you for the sterner tasks of the ministry. It is the hard things we have to do which do the most for us and count the most for others.

"I rejoice in Tom II. You know what I think of Tom I., and while my thoughts of him are all of love, I hope Tom II. will far eclipse Tom I. in every element of greatness. Tell your wife I can't forget my happy visit to the parsonage at Orange, nor the bright and cheery way in which she treated me, and I trust that she will keep you straight and inspire you to great achievements."

Rev. Robert H. Winfree of Chesterfield was the young ministerial friend with whom he had spent many days of happy fellowship. He loved Robert with a fatherly affection.

"My Dear Robert,—If you would get stronger, as it is your solemn duty to do, and make up your mind like a gentleman that you will live and labor twenty-five years longer, I would like for you to preach every other Sunday afternoon at Chesterfield, stick to old Mount Hermon, ride in the Bethel Chariot and bring things to pass at Midlothian. That would pull the sweat out of you and make a new man of you.

"It has been two months since I saw you and I am engaged for March. That puts our contacts too far apart. We must get closer together and tighten the ties until the time of my going comes. Give my love to ever dear Mrs. Winfree. I write her name high on the roll of friendship and, as for you, you are the joy of my soul.

"As ever and even more so."

Digitized by Google

The earlier pages of this biography tells how in the Summer of 1866, at a meeting at Hopeful church in Louisa County, he told a young man that he believed the reason he would not become a christian was that he was afraid he would have to preach the gospel and he secured his promise that he would, that night on his knees, either surrender to Christ or else burn his Bible and abandon Christianity. The next morning the young man made his public confession of Christ and soon started for the Seminary. For many, many years this man Rev. Dr. W. Carter Lindsay, had been the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Columbia, S. C., and was called the Nestor of South Carolina Baptists. Dr. Hatcher wrote him the following letter from Bluefield:

"My Beloved Friend,—From the far away day when I gave you the glad hand at Hopeful on the morning when you first declared your allegiance to Christ, I have loved you and all that pertained to you has been of concern to me.

"I feel a certain pride of seniority about you, a little paternal pride in my relationship to you and ever so much joy in the honorable career that you have had.

"With the best wishes of a fifty-year friendship I greet you and wish you peace and honor in this world and glory in the other."

This letter brought the following reply from Dr. Lindsay:

"Columbia, S. C., February 16th, 1911.

"My Dear Bro. Hatcher,—Your letter juicy as an orange and sweet as your dear old heart comes like music across water. You have never left my field of vision since that natal day in old Hopeful and will never leave it either on this or the other side of the so-called great Divide. I have a million things to talk to you about but cant write. So come and stay a month.

"Yes the parsonage and full salary for life is good and unusual provision by the church—but not when you know the church. . . . . .

"From the top of 71 years (yesterday) I send my heart freighted with a half century of love.

"W. C. Lindsay."

Digitized by Google

He writes on the 11th to Rev. C. E. Burts:

"My Beloved Friend,—I have no business on earth with you except to say that I love you with a devotion that deepens steadily; I love your wife as much as I love you, and as much more as she is more lovely than you, and as for Charles II, my brave and beautiful Charles, I recall now my glimpse of him in Baltimore. He looked the grand little chap that he is and my soul knit to him. The precious little scamp actually loved me before he knew what loving was and that, of course, made me love him.

"I hope things go well with you, and no matter which way they go I am fixed in the belief that you will never come out of South Carolina till you scale the heights of the invisible world and take citizenship in the Delectable City.

"There is little need to write anything about myself. I may be permitted to report that I am still living, and though the only crop which I am now growing is a crop of infirmities, I find it pleasant to live.

"My thoughts run much of late on book making."

To his ever dear friend Dr. Charles H. Ryland he writes:

"My Dear Charles,—It has been my reproach that I did not at once write to you after reading carefully your address at the Seminary in Louisville. I must confess that your output on that occasion was to me one of the most interesting and refreshing things that has come under my eye for ever so long.

"I was surprised that you could command, either by your memory or imagination, such a rich store of historical and personal incident, and you command my admiration by the adroit and practised manner in which you wove these things into an address. I read every word of it and I went back over some of it and read it again and got ever so much rejuvenation and joy out of it.

"I said at the alumni meeting in Roanoke in the way of pleasantry that you and Shipman are always looking down on me from supercilious heights because I had never been to the Seminary. That was purely a joke, born of the occasion and dying with it, but after your address I am free to say that you have a right to look down on me. The Seminary did impersishable things for you and helped you up so much that I will recognize your superiority and will accept thankfully the downward look of my ever noble and cherished friend.

Digitized by Google

"I have always had something against you and never felt it so keenly since I read that address. I have told you that your pen was grudging and reluctant; you have seemed to have no sense of obligation to write and the result is that you have written nothing as compared with what you can write and which the people would gladly read if you would write.

"I hope they are pulling you out of the treadmill of your old office and giving you ample provision for comparative leisure and in that way opening to you the opportunity of speaking to the people more than you have in the past. Why not write a book, a book embodying your thoughts which have been born along the way and which have ripened with your years. I find that people want something out of the life of men whom they believe in. Even in my own little trial at authorship of late I have found that my pen is far more powerful than my voice, and surely there is an audience on the earth awaiting any message that you would be willing to give."

To Dr. R. M. Inlow, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tenn., he writes:

"In the crash and confusion of Xmas time I failed to answer your lovely letter. . . I feel that God has given you the mastery and freedom of your great pastorate and that makes me rejoice greatly.

"And yet it occurs to me that I have somewhat against you. I went to J———— L———— at the Southern Baptist Convention and asked him to make you reply to the address of welcome and he told me that he was going to do it. He looked up another man at once, one of my own children—Hurt of Arkansas. I collared L———— on the spot and asked him how about Inlow, and he told me that you would not do it. Of course you had a right to decline but I did not want you to decline. I wanted the people to see you and to hear you, but never mind, you do as you please and work out your own destiny.

"There is one thing, however, you can't do, I defy you to do it, and that is to keep me from thinking you are a royally fine fellow and I hope you will not stop till you stand on the white hills of human glory.

"Show your wife what I told you about not making that speech and ask her to please be on my side about it. Whenever you get lonesome and feel that you have no friends, then, write to one friend that you have who does not amount to much."

Digitized by Google

He received a letter from Mr. Henry Schmelz of Hampton regarding Mr. Schmelz's brother George who had recently died and who until his death had been the teacher of one of the largest men's classes in Virginia. He replies as follows:

"It seems that the world grew dark when George died, but the love which breathes in your letter brings back much of the light.

"Let us get closer together and let us confer together, let us cheer and inspire each other—that is, for the little while that I am allowed to stay on this side of the river.

"I write more especially to express my joy that you have taken George's Bible class; that takes from me a great anxiety—a dread lest the masterpiece of George's life should suddenly crumble to pieces. I believe that you are the man to make it greater than even George ever made it; you are capable of it; you always do your best in whatever you undertake, and you have in George's record an adequate inspiration to move you forward with the task.

"If you find at any time and in any way I can ever help you about that class, command me; I will go to Hampton at any possible time if there is anything that I could possibly do to inspire the class to greater things. Simplify your life as far as you can and concentrate your forces on that class; it is a work for a master hand and will call out the best of your brains and of your soul; it willl make you a greater and a happier man just in proportion to the ardor and patience with which you give to it your leadership and your love.

"I thank you for opening the gates of your hospitality; it looks as if I have scant time for sociability. I go nowhere except where work calls me and it calls me down many ways into which I can't enter, but I hope the Lord will open the way to go to Hampton to see you."

He writes regarding the Academy, "I have been wishing for some time that things could come to the stage where I could trust the Academy to live without me,—a thing which it will have to do any how in a little while, or not live at all."

His friendships included in their happy circle men in many walks of life. There was a brilliant lawyer, whom he had met while holding meetings in another state. This gentleman, much

Digitized by Google

younger than he, was not a christian and to him Dr. Hatcher writes from Bluefield—from which place all the letters in this series were written:

"My Dear Tom,—I can't hold out any longer. My thoughts run after you in the day and watch around you at night. You have an undisputed seat in the castle of my life and I shall cherish you as long as I live.

"When yesterday I got a letter from Dr. Wood telling me that he saw you in his congregation every Sunday morning, my heart grew warm and tender towards you. It makes me feel that you are coming; I feel truly that the hand of God is upon you and that you are to be one of God's leaders yet. I do not write to upbraid you, or lecture you, but simply to tell you that you live in my heart and I can't be happy in my thoughts about you till I hear the good news. Your heart is filled with good convictions, and if you will follow them they will in a little while bring you into the light.

"Your place is among Christians and not among the sceptical and ignoble. I am going to keep my ear to the ground until it catches the joyful news. I think I speak truthfully when I say that I am more interested in your conversion than in that of any other man in the world. Don't wait until you join the church to write to me, but do not make it long before you write to me that you have joined the church.

"Do not write to me unless you feel like it but keep on loving me as I really believe you do, but friendship is a game at which I somehow feel that I can usually beat the other fellow. My soul was made for comradeship and when I run up on a fellow like you, I put my grappling hooks in him down to the marrow of his bones, but I am sure you think far more of me than I am worthy of, and that is all that I ask."

In reply, his lawyer friend wrote as follows:

"My Dear Friend, Guide and Counselor,—When I asked John Henry Cammack where I should direct a letter to you he replied in that positive, breezy way of his, 'Why Sir, you might direct it to Wm. E. Hatcher, Virginia, and he would receive it; he is that well known in Virginia.' I am directing this letter, however, to the Post Office of your pet institution, Fork Union, where that Academy stands and for unnumbered

Digitized by Google

years, let us hope, will stand as one of the monuments of your faithful work for your state and country and for man.

"Of course you need not to be told how much I prize your letter and how much I shall prize it to the end of my days, for you are one of the men who know. I realize full well how strenous and faithful your labors are in this world, how day by day, you give the energies of your life freely and fervently to christian civilization and yet I am selfish enough to place this added taxation upon you; you have put your hand to the plow in the way of our personal friendship and love and you must not turn back, that is to say you must write letters to me even though their writing becomes an irksome task to you. . . ."

This letter probably reached him upon his return to Fork Union, and while at Charlottesville he wrote his friend the following reply:

"My own Dear Tom,—Your letter was a thing of beauty. It had to me the charm of a poem. I read it with unfeigned joy, and a moisture was on my eyelids as I read. It would be impossible for me to express my appreciation of you; I love you with a great, hot, trusting, admiring affection. In some way, you appeal to the depths of my soul. There are few men of whom I think so much, or with such vast and deepening interest. Your life has crept into me and taken root in a dozen spots, and I feel that we have been together for ever,—at any rate, we will be together for ever and ever. I am pleased with myself in one point, at least, which concerns you. You have not gone so far in the way of faith as I feel you must go and will go, but I do not get impatient with you; my soul waits on you and watches for your coming. I am a little afraid; I must confess that I get uneasy lest the tide should bear me out before I should see you cross the bar coming in. If I was dying, and my mind was clear, I would say to myself, 'Tom will come after awhile.' If you could hasten your coming and let me enjoy it before I go, I do not know whether I would like you any better; but I would like to see you come in and have a while to enjoy it. There are some restraining ties in your life which I do not understand; some points about which I do not know how to help you. I feel sorry about it. Possibly you might tell me more about yourself some time, and we may be able to get closer together; and, if it should be that way, I shall be wonderfully glad.

Digitized by Google

"I need give you no news; it would hardly interest you. And yet you ought to know that I had a glorious revival in Bluefield; a gracious meeting at Fork Union, in which many of the Cadets were saved; now I am closing a good meeting with the First church in Charlottesville; and this with my seventy-six years on my shoulders and my love of God, and with you, Tom, in my heart, I am pulling along as happy as I can be; but not so happy, Tom, not so happy, Tom as I am going to be when you step over the line and I hail you as a brother in Jesus Christ.

"Do not forget me; now and then write a letter, and let us stick together with the tenacity of an ever-growing friendship.

"I am, dear Tom, a believer in you."

In writing to a friend about his joy in "book making" he says:

"I do not know that I have ever gotten as much assurance of my usefulness in the pulpit as comes to me in regard to the book. I am working on another and probably if life and strength continue there may be two or three more before my pen is set at liberty. . . And yet I cant live without contact with the people."

To literary men authorship sometimes brings rich delight. Throughout his ministerial life, Dr. Hatcher had been helping people by his sermons. But his book opened a new fountain in his soul. This book was like a courier, who having gathered up treasures along the trail of his friendly years was carrying them into almost every country of earth and the thought was delightful to him that while with his own lips he was proclaiming the gospel there was also his books that were busy at the same task. To Rev. J. M. Beadles he writes:

"About the best that I can say of the book is that I am receiving almost every day letters from many states and scores of our preachers which tell me of the comfort and spiritual exaltation which the book brings to them. . . . but poorly as I do it the delight of my life is to preach and I can't recover from the ever-flaming passion for souls. To save the people is the heavenliest thing of all the earth. . . .

Digitized by Google

"The Academy flourishes though I find it an increasing burden on my shoulders and you need not wonder if it should come to you before very long that I have decided to let other shoulders ache and groan under its weight."

Regarding his meetings in Bluefield the Herald says: "The most far reaching meeting ever held in the city was the one in which Dr. Hatcher aided Dr. Mabie."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XLIII

1911

CONTINUOUS ACTIVITIES. MEETINGS AT POCOMOKE. ADDRESS AT MEREDITH COLLEGE. BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE. CORRESPONDENCE. HIS ENEMIES. BALTIMORE STATE MISSION BANQUET. ADDRESS BEFORE COLLEGE TRUSTEES. OPTIMISM. OLD AGE.

From Charlottesville where he was holding meetings—after his meeting with the cadets at the Academy—he writes that his ailments were still oppressing him and then he adds "Work is my most effective medicine."

"What a life you are leading" writes Dr. C. H. Ryland "I call it *strenuous*. I could not understand it if I were to try a year. . . Please take care of yourself old boy." Mr. W. W. Baker, member of the Legislature, writes him:

"If there has been any good influences exerted in the slips and slides of my life, they can be traced to the influences exerted by Dr. W. E. Hatcher."

He received a striking letter from Boston:

"My Dear Dr. Hatcher,—I have just been to the Public Library and found there your 'Along the Trail of the Friendly Years.'

"A newspaper of a few days ago states that you had just passed your 76 birthday. I have not quite attained my 70th and feel sometimes that my life has been useless and has nearly reached its limit. Yet you have written the two most readable books in the language since you were my age,—'John Jasper' and 'Along the Trail of the Friendly Years'. I repeat the long

Digitized by Google

title because I like it. It gives one a feeling of a long Summer melody and harmony.

"Not that the book shows your life to have been all music—you have had your strenuous times as well as the rest of us.

"You remember the king's remark to Johnson,—having told Dr. Johnson that he hoped he would write more and Johnson having replied that he thought that he had written enough, the king instantly said, 'I should have thought so also *had you not written so well.*

"With great respect,
"Yours Sincerely,
"E. E. Lewis."

To Orie at Bryn Mawr he writes on March 14th:

"I blush with guilt. So full is my slate with meetings dedications and things and things that not a day of rest or social indulgence is left me. It is sorrow indeed not to come. My love of work must be abnormal for I am always welcoming calls and eagerly making engagements. So Bryn Mawr and three as lovely girls as any common father ever had must be regretfully denied. It is a cut in my heart to do it. . . .

"Thanks and love to you whom I love so much and to my other two ever enshrined in my heart.

"As ever and forever."

His grandson will ever prize the following letter:

"Charlottesville, Va., March, 16th, 1911.

"Master William E. Hatcher, Jr.,
"Baltimore, Md.:

"My Dear Ever Cherished Boy,— . . . I must thank heaven that I have a grandson and such a grandson as you are. In all the world you are the only one who bears my name. I am very fond of my name; they have called me William E. Hatcher for nearly seventy-seven years and for sixty-six years of that time I have had the name all to myself and then you began to wear the name. On all the earth, so far as I know, you are the only living being who dares to wear my name and to wear it as a name which you took from me. It makes me really proud that you have my name. Wherever you go it tells that you and I are linked very close; we have exactly the same name.

Digitized by Google

After awhile I will have no further use for the name and then it will be yours all to your self. I hope to leave it to you with out any bad scratches on it and I have a great hope that you will make it greater and more honorable than it has ever been.

"I have great ambitions for you; I desire that you will cultivate among other good habits the habit of writing. Learn all about words, their different shades of meaning and write sentences with big words in them and learn to use the words in just exactly their right meaning. Your father has written several books and your grandfather has played a little at book making, but you must tower far above both of us and write books that will be read all around the world.

One morning this week I opened my mail and there were three letters in it about one of my books, one, from a great preacher in Memphis, Tenn; one, from a learned Judge of Dakota but written from Boston, where he is spending the winter and one from Canton, China where Ah Fong came from. That will do fairly well for the old grandfather, but when the grandson becomes a book-writer of forty years to come, he must on some one morning get letters from several continents telling him what great books he has written.

"Take care of your health and run, jump, wrestle, play ball, turn somersaults, harden your muscles be too brave to be afraid, too truthful to hide anything and above all fear God.

"Very lovingly,

"William E. Hatcher."

To his wife he writes on March 18th, from Charlottesville:

". . . I spend my mornings in writing, go out to dinner, hold the afternoon service, snatch a short nap before supper, hold the night meeting, talk some after I get home, then write some before I go to bed and often write before breakfast. . . This is Saturday morning and my burdens are exceptionably heavy today, so I bid you good bye with all best wishes and hope to see you and the little Baltimore tribe before another full moon."

A pastor in one of the lower counties of the state writes him:

"As the days and years come and go I cease not to thank God for your life; for its wide and varied influence for good and for the help it has been to poor me. I cannot express to you

Digitized by Google

how much I do appreciate your friendship and kindly feeling for me through these many years. . . I can't see how a man with the years of hard work behind him that you have, can be so elastic of step, so vigorous in mind, so bright and cheering in spirit as you are. But, thank God, time is dealing with you gently. Virginia Baptists need your ripe experience and wise counsels for many years to come yet."

From South Boston, Va., where he is holding meetings he writes:

"I have four services tomorrow three sermons and the Sunday School. . . I have nothing to fear in South Boston except my own folly and the hospitality of the people." He seems as determined as ever that his final summons, when it comes, shall catch him in the harvest field with sickle in hand.

"I am rather bewildered by my Southern invitations to hold meetings, but as yet I havn't decided to accept any of them. My dedication engagements are multiplying and I am almost tempted to do nothing else during the Summer months. I feel that I ought to finish my next book during the Summer and get well under way my two others which perhaps will never be finished."

At South Boston we find the physician seeking to patch him up as he is busy in the meetings. He writes:

"I am suffering with one of the most unmannered and aggravating colds that I have had for years. It has nearly blocked up my throat, but the meeting rolls on gloriously indeed. . . With the loss of one afternoon sermon I have stuck to my post. I am to see the Doctor twice today, hold services, answer a lot of letters and work on my Home Board manuscript which rides me like a night mare. . . . I am in mortal dread of indulging my appetite at the expense of my health."

"Fork Union, April 3rd, 1911.

"Dear Jennie,—I got home today about as much frazzled as ever in my busy beat along the way. I had five services yesterday at South Boston, took train at 2:42 A. M. slept half hour on the road, reached Richmond at 6:50 this morning,

Digitized by Google

had breakfast at Murphy's with Boatwright, had talks with two other men, caught 10 A. M. train, came from Bremo with a lame horse in the rain and am now working out a grievous tangle in my April engagements.

". . . . Meanwhile I hope to get the bothers of Faculty for Academy in some shape. . .

"P. S.—Thanks (socks full of them) for the bundle of nice things."

His mention of breakfast at Murphy's reminds us of his fondness for taking his meals at that hotel. One morning on the street car a gentleman asked him where he was going so early.

"To Murphy's for breakfast" he replied.

"I go to ————'s restaurant. You ought to go there."

"If a man is'nt hungry, that restaurant is a very good place to go to," said Dr. Hatcher.

He visited us in Baltimore where he baptized his grandson William E. Hatcher, Jr. at the Eutaw Place Baptist Church. From Baltimore he went to a little town in a corner of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and as he stepped aboard the train and bade me good bye, he said, "Well, I am going over to Pocomoke; I thought I might be of some cheer and help to dear old John" (Rev. John W. Hundley). His manner of saying it unconsciously revealed to me in a flash the kindly motive that was sending him on that arduous, tedious trip. Whatever thoughts I may have had up to that time as to his Pocomoke meetings, I came away from the depot saying to myself, "That's why he is picking his way over to that distant town. He thinks that he may be able to put some sunlight into the life of his old ministerial friend." After the Pocomoke visit Mr. Hundley writes to him:

". . . Your stay in my home has been to me (and all of us) one of the sweetest and most blessed experiences of my *whole* life. . . I may never again enjoy a repetition of this experience but the memory of it will last until we meet again in our father's house on high."

Digitized by Google

Regarding Dr. Hatcher's passion for cheering and helping his brethren Dr. C. H. Dodd writes:

"There was something almost riotous in his enthusiasm for his kind. It carried him into all sorts of nerve wrecking efforts to please and serve; it was characterized by such pains to help and such exercises of kindness as marked the Good Samaritan. Indeed, he epitomized our Lord's portrait of the Christian neighbor."

Dr. J. M. Frost tells of Dr. Hatcher's kindly helpfulness a few years before this:

"We met one evening by agreement as our paths had to cross by chance at Culpeper. He had been all day in an Association and yet he spent nearly all night with me at the hotel going through the manuscript of 'The Moral Dignity of Baptism' and then with the early morning each went his way to his daily task. How patient he was, how untiring, how faithful, how helpful in every way. That was not the first time nor the last. His services were ever at my call and fellowship with him was an unbroken joy. He was all this to hundreds and thousands."

Before leaving Pocomoke in April he had written the following letter to Dr. M. L. Wood:

"My ever-beloved,—I have preached practically one hundred and forty (140) times since the opening of the year. As for the quality of the performance I wish to remain distinctly dumb, but so far as the amount of the work is concerned I am willing to stand up and be examined—very likely I would be in danger of being condemned even upon the amount of such preaching as I have done and that too entirely apart from the quality of it. I have stood it wonderfully. . . .

"My cares at Fork Union multiply and they load me down.

"Give my love to all the children and embrace Matthew Leland [M. L. W's boy] and tell him I think he is one of the best friends I have on earth.

At the bottom of the page Mr. Hundley adds this footnote,

"I have the dear of a man with me and you know what a treat that is."

Digitized by Google

Soon after he left Pocomoke Mr. Hundley writes him:

"Have you fully decided to go to the Southern Baptist Convention. I think you ought to go and let them put the crown upon your head as president of the great Convention, an honor you richly deserve and one that Southern Baptists will gladly confer if you will give them the opportunity."

Many of the leading members of the Convention had expressed their desire that he should be made president of the Southern Baptist Convention at its next meeting in Florida, but his physical ailments and especially the "Academy complications" blocked his way and prevented his going to the Convention. He writes on May 11th:

"I am really on the verge of not going to the Convention in Florida. My eyes and knees are troubling me. What is even worse is that we have the gravest sort of complications in the Academy,—*the very worst ever.*"

"God bless you noble Soldier of Jesus Christ" writes Rev. J. J. Wicker, "and may these evening years pass very slowly. The world has been greatly enriched by your illustrious life and I count it a real privilege to tell you that for more than a score of years your personality and your pen have helped me to be a better minister of Jesus Christ."

Meredith College at Raleigh, N. C. secured him for the Baccalaureate sermon and he thus writes me concerning his visit:

"I had an epoch of glory in my Raleigh trip. They said the old gentleman knocked things—but they were simply trying to play on the credulity of your very ancient and unworthy parent.

"I am unwell in several suburban sections of any corporosity. . . ."

The president of the above-mentioned College, Dr. R. T. Vann, wrote him on his return from Raleigh the following:

Digitized by Google

"My Dear old Soldier,—I ought to say, old Commander, I know; but you have such a knack of filling the chaps with a thrill of comradeship that they forget.

"I have no business in writing this except to tell you how heartily we enjoyed you. According to the Almanac and the family record you are not so young as you once were. But neither of these seems to cut any ice with you. I never heard you do better. Hang the Almanac and the family records. If you persist in behaving as you have been doing for the last fifty of sixty years you may look for another summons before long to appear here and stand trial again. God's best blessings on you and may it please him to keep you out of heaven for twenty-five years more."

A letter reached him announcing the birth of little Miss Nancy Almond Witt whose happy parents he had united in marriage a few years before. He dropped his tasks and sends on June 10th the following letter to the little "new arrival".

"My Dear Cousin Nancy,—I am happy, indeed, to learn of your safe arrival on this terrestrial globe on June 7th, 1911. There was a distinct need for you, and I am sure that you will prove yourself worthy of your calling. You are expected to keep your father and mother under good control and on good terms with each other. You are also expected to make yourself active in keeping them awake at night and to demand their attention always when it suits them least to give it. Remember that one of your first duties is to have colic and to advertise your arrival among the neighbors by the exercise of your vocal organs. You will hear lots of nonsense from your kindred and neighbors, some vowing that you are the exact image of your father, others mendaciously vowing that you are the exact picture of your mother, all of them declaring that you are beautiful, and a few of the wisest people in the community will pronounce you "the cutest thing" they have ever seen.

"I hope to visit you before very long, and I very cordially invite you to come down to see me. I am old enough now to be in my second childhood, and so you and I can be chums. Ask your father and mother to put this letter away and read it to you on the day that you are seven years old, and after you have heard it read I hope that you will give yourself fully unto God, your Maker and your Redeemer. This is written

Digitized by Google

by the man who united in marriage your father and mother, who loved your grandmother as if she were his own daughter, who knew your great-grandmother, and also your great- great-grandmother, and who hopes that you will be the greatest of all the great ones in the honorable house to which you belong."

He attended in the month of June the meeting in Philadelphia of the Baptist World Alliance. From all parts of the earth came the Baptist representatives to Philadelphia. He reveled in the meetings, and in the fellowships with the brethren. He was given a seat at the front above the pulpit platform where he could easily see and hear and it was to him a spiritual feast. He had been asked to speak for the South at the Roll Call of the Nations. It was a memorable scene. He spoke his brief message and then called upon the Southern delegates (and they were a small army) to stand and sing. He struck up his favorite hymn, "We'll work till Jesus comes" and in mighty volume it rolled from their lips. Probably the crowning session of the Convention was on the morning when the Russian Baptist preachers, who bore upon their bodies the scars of their persecutions, were introduced to the vast audience, after which an appeal was made to the audience for funds to establish in Europe a Theological Seminary for the Russian Baptists. Dr. F. B. Meyer, of London, who presided over this part of the service, after presenting the matter to the audience, said, "Where is Dr. Hatcher? I want him to come and take this collection."

He stepped upon the platform and began with the words, "Surely if heaven ever interposed to prepare an occasion for a collection we have witnessed such preparation here this morning." He spoke a few further words and then made the call for subscriptions and they began to come; they came in such rapid and multitudinous fashion that it kept not only Dr. Hatcher busy receiving them but also Dr. Meyer and Ex-Governor E. W. Stephens who was pressed into service.

When he was not in the meeting he was busy greeting friends from far and near.

Digitized by Google

"What I heard and saw at the Alliance" he writes in the Standard, "put new vigor and hopefulness into my soul. I not only believe in the doctrines of the Baptists, but I believe in the future of the Baptists more than I ever did.

"When the roll call of the nations came at the Alliance and I saw representatives from over sixty different kingdoms and countries, saw how they felt and saw exactly how I felt and believed as they did I realized that the Baptists were out on the highway of life and were called to a world wide work."

He was greatly impressed by the sight of one of the old Russian Baptist heroes, Rev. Fedot Petrovidtch Kostromin, a minister who had suffered fearful persecutions and who was one of those who spoke before the Alliance. He penned a rich tribute to the old man which was published in "Modern Baptist Heroes and Martyrs," edited by Dr. J. N. Prestridge, 1911. He describes the old hero's appearance as he came forward and addressed the Alliance.

A few paragraphs of the tribute are quoted here:

"My first sight of him was a revelation; his serious face was his biography and his voice spoke nothing that I understood and yet in some way they told me of sorrows which could never be fully told. He had the look of a martyr, who as yet had no sense of being one. As a fact our Russian brother broke in upon us in no conspicuous way; indeed, he limped in, as one who had almost forgotten himself. Already the Russian exhibit, if we may speak of it as such, under the high-strung and magnetic Shakespeare, had already filled us with an overflowing wonder. For my part I thought that the strain was about over and was preparing to take my breath and cool down. It did not stir me when a snowy-haired patriot with noiseless feet strode down from the gallery to the platform, nor can it be said that this old gentleman was presented with any special intent to create a sensation. For my own part I am a little lost to know how it all happened. Fact after fact dropped out concerning the man and each fact was like a pearl and all the facts together made a wondrous string of pearls and before we knew it we were transfixed with the conviction that there was before us one of God's great men.

Digitized by Google

To begin with it fell out that this old gentleman, so quiet and unassuming, was a Russian Cossack and that, of course, marked him as tough of texture, born to fight and trained to die rather than run away.

These attributes were chiseled into the old face and the old face was so fine and even lovely that I right there recast several of my old notions of the Cossacks and almost felt willing to be one if I could only be of the Kostromin type.

It added much to the charm of the moment when the fact came out that this gnarled old Russian had once been a fanatical adherent of the Greek Church and that, too, of the most destructive and intolerant sort. In those days he had a religion which delighted to extinguish the other man who thought not as he did. He found in the Baptists of his country the very objects which his cruelty could find the fiercest joy in crushing and destroying. He looked like a lion that was once wild and eager for blood, but had been tamed for domestic service, but you could recognize his type at once, his zeal was that of the bigot and he would have hailed Saul of Tarsus as a comrade in playing havoc with the friends of the Nazarene. It was hard to tell it on Kostromin, but the fact came out that he was once a desparate foe of his Russian brethren. He had that blind and vindictive sincerity which caused him to feel that the way to please God was to extinguish those who did not believe as he did. I took a cold look at the old man and felt a momentary resentment.

But very soon I came to myself. I recalled that history brings to us ample proof that the Lord takes an economic interest in men who are notably effective in trying to overturn the truth. He sees in them a nerve and a vigor which, if seasoned with his own grace, would do much to help His own Kingdom. It is no rare thing for the Spirit of God to invade the domain of Satan and choose some of his stalwart leaders and bring them over for service in the Kingdom of Light. That was the way that Paul was brought in and we found out that same Thursday that Kostromin was also brought in that way."

But the Alliance is over and he sets forth again upon his rounds. He writes on July 6th:

"I slipped away and spent the fourth of July at the Trustee meeting at Salem. That trip chopped me up considerably,

Digitized by Google

requiring me to get up two mornings about 5:30 to catch the train and poured heat into me from all points of the compass.

"Beginning with the third Sunday I have dedications straight along for four Sundays, with several others trying to fix their days. . . ."

This was his very life,—ever traveling and preaching and working, and all that he asked was that he might be permitted to keep up this busy programme until the moment of his final going. Rev. F. L. Hardy of Indiana writes him in July:

"I want to tell you how you influenced me to enter the ministry. Some 16 years ago while living in Salem, Va., I entered a contest for a medal given by the W. C. T. U. The contest was held in the Salem Presbyterian church. . . You came with Dr. Taylor [Baptist pastor] to hear the contest. The prize was given to me, being delivered by one of the Salem lawyers. At the close you came to the front and Dr. Taylor introduced you to each one of the six boys. You placed your arm around me and drawing me to your side said, 'Frank that was great; now the next step is Richmond College and then the ministry.' I made no reply but your word had hit the mark. You were the first preacher to encourage me to enter the great work that I am now engaged in. You will be glad to know that I am pastor of a church with 477 members in a little city of 10,000. We have been here for nineteen months in which time we have received 104 into the church and have raised over $1100 for missions. During this time I have taken my degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. . . . I simply state the above to let you know that God is using the boy you started in the work. On August 27th and Sept. 3rd I am to supply your old church Grace Street. . .

"Your Son in the ministry,

"F. L. Hardy."

I wrote him regarding my thoughts of building me a home and he wrote me in reply:

". . . When I undertook my first building enterprise—which was 608 West Grace—I banished my family for six months and saved $600 by it. . . .

"Your letter puts me to thinking, . . . I am anxious

Digitized by Google

to see the matter from the beginning to the finish. . . Our last talk indicated on your part what seemed to me at least quite a stalwart purpose not to stay much longer in Baltimore. If you are to make a change you would find it very embarrassing to hold your property or to carry your debt during the interim and the expenses of the change.

"Think this over. . . ."

He speaks in his next letter of his fattening,— a dangerous symptom it was.

"My Dear Anna,—Your surprisingly sweet letter came yesterday. You have been all that a daughter could be to me since you entered my family and my only regret that I have ever had in connection with you has been that I could add so little to your happiness. . . .

"Tell Eldridge that I had a great day at old Chesterfield Church and told them about my grandfather Jeremiah, and also about my son, with myself slipped in between them, and all of us taking part in the Baptist work in Chesterfield. I drew it mild however so far as the part the Hatchers had taken. I was making a speech on the Baptist history of Chesterfield.

"I have fattened up until I am almost a reproach to the family, but my health seems quite good."

His seventy-seventh birthday draws near as he writes to President Bryan, of Colgate University:

"I will not torment you with sentimental letters today. All I ask is that you will greet Mrs. Bryan and tell her that she is not only worthy of her husband, but worthy of a better one and, as for the three domestic jewels, my heart warms towards every one of them as I think of them. Today I can report myself in excellent health and on next Tuesday, if I am alive, there will be a faint pretense in my home beneath the big oaks of Careby Hall of celebrating my seventy-seventh anniversary. It is not certain however that I will attend. I never enjoy my absence more from home than when they get up a little sentimental confusion at my expense and call it a celebration.

"A thousand good wishes attend you on your career of service and honor."

Digitized by Google

Like birds flocking to his room with their sweet notes of cheer came the letters from his friends everywhere. Dr. Jones of Colgate, after telling of a gathering of friends (including President Bryan) at his house and his reading to them a letter received from Dr. Hatcher thus continues:

"Said Bryan 'I would be glad to go out and take a good thrashing if I could go out and come back and find Dr. Hatcher here.' Then it came out that yesterday you passed your 77th milestone and in behalf of the assembled company I promised to write you, offering you our hearty felicitations and our devoted love. We all confessed to the same thing,—our unbounded admiration for you as a preacher, our profound reverence for you as a christian and our ardent affection for you as a friend. If we had been proposing toasts this would have been the sentiment to which we would have drained our glasses,—many years to the incomparable Hatcher; and may we all have the joy of seeing him again in the flesh and in Hamilton.' (Tremendous enthusiasm).

"I wish to recur to that part of your letter of March last in which you say you have in mind the writing of a book on the 'Philosophy of Illustration'. . . How glad I would be to use it in my classes in Homiletics."

He was fond of dictating to his stenographer out in the yard at Careby Hall during these Summer days. He was writing for the Herald a loving tribute to Dr. James B. Taylor who had recently died and he closed it with the words:

"Beneath these trees I sit this morning and my cherished friend is still with me. He is not in Hollywood [Cemetery]—his soul has risen and already he is seeing the face of him in whom for more than half a century his soul found its highest joy. . . Those that loved him. . . have enough of good in him to remember to gladden their soul until they go to meet him again."

Under those trees he would sit and not only do his dictating but also read his mail, receive his visitors, play games with his grandchildren and chat with the family. One of his letters was from Rev. F. W. Tomlinson who writes:

Digitized by Google

"John Jasper has helped me speak the truth at scores of funeral services. . . . I often read a chapter in it [Along the Trail of the Friendly Years] before working on a sermon."

He attended one of the District Associations and a young minister who was his room mate says:

"Dr. Hatcher did not sleep but a few hours during the night and he spent most of the night reading by the lamp light. He said he had to read himself to sleep in that way. I thought next day he would be languid and weak after such little sleep but to my amazement he was one of the most active men among us and made several bright speeches and seemed full of life. One morning as he lay in bed another minister came in and began to talk about a certain pastor who in recent years had turned an unfriendly side towards Dr. Hatcher—though that was not mentioned in our conversation that morning. Dr. Hatcher said somewhat dryly as he lay in bed, 'The trouble with ——— is that he tries to be a Higher Critic and can't.'"

In one of the District Associations was a young minister whom he greatly loved, and he wrote to two or three members of the Association suggesting that they elect this young preacher to the moderatorship of the body at its meeting in August. The suggestion was cordially accepted and at the opening of the Association his young friend was placed in nomination. The nomination startled the young minister; he shrank from the honor and declined to accept the position saying that the moderatorship required business qualities and therefore a layman rather than a preacher should be elected to the position. Upon hearing of it Dr. Hatcher wrote him:

"If I had been in reach of you with a cudgel I would have given you six strokes across your brow for not allowing them to elect you Moderator of the Association. I had taken pains to work the thing up. I wanted you in that chair and I am as mad as blazes with you that you declined and I wish you would tell your wife what I say about it. You've got a vicious back step to you and I would almost be willing to cut off one of your feet to break it up.

Digitized by Google

"Besides why should you go over and join the enemy and talk about its being a 'business' as if preachers did not have sense enough to be business men. Why should you join the evil tongued gang who are always ready to say that preachers do not know anything about business. Come out from among any such ill-starred and misguided cranks and stand up for the ministry.

"But, nevertheless, I love you and Bagby about as much as I do the whole senatorial district."

The following letter to a pastor is a specimen of the many efforts that he was making to help needy boys come to the Academy:

"My Dear Bro,— . . . . Send your boy along; ask the Lord to help you to raise the money; I will look after the fifty dollars promised and also see that he pays only half tuition and even if you cannot keep him here all the time we can make an honest effort and if we fail our failure will be to our credit and not to our reproach.

"Many of our boys work in order to make their way through school. It is a thoroughly respectable thing here for a boy to do and it will be a sort of test as to whether your boy has the real stuff in him for him to be willing to make some arrangement of this sort in the interest of his education. Let me know how the boy feels about it and I will then tell you what terms I can make with my neighbor."

He gathered his grandchildren at Careby for the Summer and reveled in their companionship. He wrote to Orie telling of the cordial greeting the grandchildren would give him upon his return with boxes of nuts and candies "but" said he "they have scattered them and the land is bare of all delicacies and of course my popularity is sensibly diminished. . . This place is a good place to be and all the better when you are here."

"From a human standpoint my success here is all due to you" writes Rev. J. E. Bailey of Saluda, S. C.

"The Academy is on deck" he writes me on September 21st. ". . . William plays croquet about one half of his time,

Digitized by Google

behaves well, pays me gastronomic visits six times a day and eats everything I can give him. . . ."

"William wishes to send a message but I refused him space."

He preached at his old Grace Street Church during all the Sundays of October—an experience that brought him many rich joys.

"Your father returned Monday, from Richmond" writes my mother, ". . . . He has been a little depressed I think from losing his flesh again as result of his cold."

"I get sick in turning away boys who are crying for an education" he writes "and have not the means to make the start."

His cares could not destroy his cheery mood and he was ever ready for a joke. He heard that his friend Mr. R. S. Barbour's large wagon factory had recently been hit by two fires and he thus writes him:

"Here I am without a stenographer and almost without everything else except a coughing cold, trying to beat up a letter to a friend who has been tried by fire. The ways of Providence get criss-cross bad enough with me when I look at myself and feel that if I were to die I have'nt got a wagon to haul what is left of me out to the Potter's field, while you have wagons to burn. I may seem to play a trick of splendor by picking my teeth at the Jefferson, but what am I to think of you when you get up two fires within a month.

"But the Lord bless you just the same and give you all the wagons you would like to have in this world and golden chariots in the world to come."

"To be near you was for many years one of the ideals of my life" writes Dr. W. C. Taylor, "Long before you knew me I was being drawn towards you. . . You have passed through many trials,—few indeed there are that are possible to patient souls with which you are not familiar by a deep personal experience. But how graciously you have passed through them all and how victoriously you have come through them all without even the smell of fire upon your garments. . . I want that sort of grace. . . I never heard you utter an

Digitized by Google

unkind word against any person living or dead nor have I found the man who could charge you with unkindness. To me it is wonderful."

Dr. E. W. Winfrey in public print writes concerning him:

"He was no mediocre man. I've seen
Him pass unflinching and erect through flames
Which might have withered giants' thews.
He bore
Himself, not arrogantly, but serene
Against the bold assault or when the dart
Was hurled by ambushed foe.
His quick soul knew
The pain, but flung from him the venom charge
And closed and healed the cruel wound.
He was
A mighty man. If bravely bearing woes
For others meant, and gently soothing hearts
By shame or sorrow wrung,—If guiding youth,
Inspiring faint and struggling riper years,
Or cheering dim-eyed age with clearer light,—
If stirring souls to penitence and faith
And holy zeal,—If toiling much through life—
On superstructures vast, or on half-seen
Foundations yet more vast and grand and fair
Supporting—toiling aye so well we say,—
A master's hand is here,—If these are marks
Of greatness, then a mighty man he was."

Another writes:

"Dr. Hatcher's power of rebound was amazing. He passed as all of us do, through trying experiences. Yet they did not crush him. Surely his faith in God counted towards these victories."

His life had been marked by sore trials and heavy strains. A man of his positive convictions and one who fought in so many campaigns could not avoid making enemies, and it seemed to me that nearly all my life I was hearing of some

Digitized by Google

who were mad with him, or pursuing hostile tactics towards him. It is an interesting study to try to determine how a man's enemies are made. He wrote an article for the Seminary Magazine on "The Mad Brother" who, he said, was often a missionary to us in that he put us on our best behavior by watching us closely for flaws. He said of himself "My worst enemies were those I had served." Bitterness, however, found no lodgment in his heart.

Not even a pugilistic letter seemed able to disturb his serenity. A professor in one of the undenominational schools of the state wrote him a critical epistle regarding his position as to feasts, fairs, etc., in churches and he sent the professor the following reply:

"I must thank you for your critical and disapproving letter. I love people who do not agree with me. They are likely to benefit me more than those who seek to flatter and confirm me in my opinion. Evidently you and I do not see some things alike, but we do not have cause to fall out on that account. In that time when we shall see Him face to face I have a hope that we will not only be satisfied with Him but be satisfied with each other."

In November he showed his ability to step into a public breach and meet a great occasion upon a few moment's notice. It was in Baltimore at a State Mission Banquet which the expected orator had been prevented at the last moment from attending. Two or three hours before the time he was asked if he could come to the rescue. A great State Mission campaign was to be launched. He agreed and with his white locks his bright eye and eager countenance, as he sat in the seat of honor, he presented an interesting picture.

He seemed to catch the spirit of the gathering and his enthusiasm became contagious. The president Mr. Harry Tyler, made a stirring introductory address and at its close Dr. Hatcher struck up his favorite hymn "We'll work till Jesus Comes" and it was caught up by those present and sung with thrilling power. I do not remember the words of his

Digitized by Google

address but I know that he set a lofty standard for our forward movement, filled the audience with high ideals regarding it and inspired them with a purpose to accomplish it, and, at its close, pastors and laymen from the churches arose, and pledged the cooperation of themselves and their churches for the campaign.

In an address in December before the Board of Trustees of Richmond College he rendered a memorable service to that institution. The college stood at a crisis. Plans had been drawn for a vast enlargement of the institution,—at a cost as it was thought of $100,000. When the estimates were received it was found that the cost would be between two and three hundred thousand dollars. The Trustees stood appalled at the thought of such a venture. To launch the College upon such an expenditure seemed to some of the members a ruinous undertaking and all seemed doubtful or uncertain. It was under such conditions in the meeting of the Board that he made his speech and those who heard him say that on that day he touched the high mark of his eloquence.

Instead of wagging his head and saying "Beware brethren; let us move slowly" he sounded the signal for the large and daring enterprise. He began his speech by reminding them of their Baptist forefathers in Virginia,—of what they had attempted and suffered in laying the foundations on which they were then standing, and also of what triumphs they had won. He next came to the College, its early history, its past achievements and its present attainments; he paid tribute to the Baptist brotherhood in Virginia and then he pulled aside the curtain and unveiled the future that loomed before the institution.

"It was that speech" said Lieut-Gov. Ellyson "that settled the question as to whether the Trustees should attempt the larger movement."

"The Richmond College which will soon rise into being" writes Dr. Dodd "will be one of his monuments—not the only one—but one of the biggest and best. It will shine with the reflected light of his incomparable love for young men."

Digitized by Google

Let those who have an eye for interesting objects turn their gaze upon that scene in the trustee meeting that day. Old age always walks with cautious steps and assumes the philosopher's mien as it puts forth its restraining hand upon the shoulders of youth. A man with 77 birthdays to his credit has usually settled into a state of conservatism and timidity and contentment. But not so with the aged trustee in his speech that day. He had not lacked, in his long life of warfare and struggle, the experiences that ofttimes make men sour and pessimistic. Burdens many had weighted him down; strains and sorrows had racked his soul and none could have been surprised if his years of stress and conflict had worn and depressed his spirit. But he had kept burning the fires of youth and the further along the road he moved the brighter they seemed to glow. Those who heard his speech that day before the Trustees said it was the speech of a young man.

"He seemed" said Dr. Herndon "to have drunk from that fountain of eternal youth" and Dr. G. B. Taylor said that he was the beau-ideal of the man whose natural force was not abated. His little granddaughter asked one day "why do people have grey hair?"

"Because they get old."

"Well" she replied "my grandfather has grey hairs but he is not old."

"I shall never allow myself to grow old" writes Dr. Landrum "so long as I remember how to the last boyishness beat in Dr. Hatcher's blood."

"No young fellow in the opening years of his ministry" says Dr. Pitt "could have been more bouyant, more dashing than he was down to the close of his remarkable career."

The old philosopher, Sam Johnson, is reputed to have said that it was worth 500 pounds a year to be able to look upon the bright side of things and some have taken these words as a description of the optimist. Dr. Hatcher had learned

Digitized by Google

the art of living on the bright side,—not merely of things but also of people and of large and critical situations. Yea the great future loomed brightly before him and filled his path with light. And yet all such definitions of the optimist seemed to him inadequate. In one place, in writing about the optimist he declares, "Primarily the optimist is a man with a passion for the best." Several times have these pages told of William E. Hatcher's "passion for the best." It burned in him as a lad; it followed him through his school and his ministry. He had his own conceptions of the optimist, and one day, in the public print, he drew the picture of several of the falsely called optimists and then adds:

"But thanks to heaven a thousand times! There are many, many real optimists. They are free from self-conceit, full of the juice and joy of humanity, animated by a wholesome and living faith in God, and walking day by day in the heavenly path. They see human frailties and seek by gracious means to help those that struggle; their honest eyes see treachery sometimes, and they hate it, but that does not shake their faith in humanity; they meet sorrows that are grievous and losses most mysterious, but they do not lose trust in God; they see the good, the ever-growing good of this world, and live in full assurance of a life to come, where all is everlastingly good."

"The fountain of perpetual youth in his heart was ever full, free and flowing" says Dr. Landrum. "He never lived in a pickled past, but faced the east and hailed the dawn of a flowery future. Optimist he was, radiant and royal optimist. Failure never depressed him."

Dr. E. W. Winfrey writes:

> "Whate'er the night, he stood so calm upon
> The mountain-top of optimistic faith—
> So oft with steady hand and brow aglow
> He pointed to the stars affirming near
> Approach of longed-for day."

Digitized by Google

It was undoubtedly true that his spirit seemed unconquerable. There was a rebound in him, a resiliency of soul that outwitted every attack of depression or disaster.

"I could not think of him" writes Dr. Thomas B. Crane of Boston "as scowling or moping or flinging up his hands in the despair of defeat. I can well believe that on the 'perilous edge of battle' he would stand or advance smiling and that if chosen to lead the 'forlone hope' he would hearten his men by his glorious laughter. His portrait seems to me to confirm these impressions."

He had written in the Herald a few months before this the following:

"Some of my critics wantonly charge me with thinking that every revival that I attend is the best that has ever been held. I believe that I am a little that way. Indeed all the things with which God has much to do seem to me to be continually better."

In another place he wrote concerning his long pastorate at the Grace Street Church:

"If I had to explain what it was in me that made me acceptable to the church for so long a time I would say that it must have been my hopefulness. God has enabled me to live in the sunlight of the future. Discouragement long disappeared from my vocabulary, and if I had nothing else for my people I never failed to give them joy and comfort of hope."

I quote again Dr. Winfrey's words concerning him:

"His words of sage
Advice did so far shape the onward march
Of our victorious hosts,—his call to large
And larger Christian emprise rang so loud
And clear,—we named him, and he shall be named,
A LEADER OF THE ARMIES OF THE LORD."

It looked as if he wished to add a new meaning and glory to old age. It was as if he would say, 'Ah ye old ones who would wear the badges of decrepitude and idleness; ye who would make old age a couch upon which ye may recline and wearily

Digitized by Google

await the end, I say let us rather make old age the climax; let our last days be so fresh and lustrous that they will put the crown upon our life's work." In his earlier years he accorded high honor to the old. He once wrote:

"The old are our relics. They link us to the dead generations; like the crumbling towers of a ruined city they linger to remind us of bygone splendor. They are lone columns from a social fabric which, once grand and beautiful, has yielded to the waste of years. Precious treasures they are. Let no vandal hand pollute them with its touch. It is a sacrilege—an insult to the past—a stab at the heart of history—an outrage to our memories of our fathers and mothers—to neglect and slight the old."

It was Longfellow who wrote:

"What then?
Shall we sit down and idly say
The night hath come; it is no longer day?
The night hath not yet come; we are not quite
Cut off from labor by the failing light;
Something remains for us to do or dare,
Even the oldest trees some fruit may bear.
For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress."

His respect for old age was so great that instead of speaking lightly, or glibly about it he sought during his last years to dignify and to beautify it by happily ministering to others. His letters and conversations showed that he felt that he was moving near the edge and might at any moment be in the other world. That thought put joy within him and he lived now under the light of that heavenly prospect.

In one of his sermons he exclaimed: "It is noble to become so absorbed in the King's business as to forget awhile what the future holds for us. But, O, the future must be full of interest to the soul who has felt the powers of the world to come. There are burnings within us which drive us mad with expectation. We stand upon the shore and wonder what we shall see when the ship comes to take us over the sea."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XLIV

1912

LABORS IN FLORIDA. CAMPAIGN FOR THE ORANGEBURG SCHOOL. FAREWELL MEETING WITH AH FONG. LABORS IN SOUTH CAROLINA. WORKING WHILE IT IS DAY. HIS PORTRAIT UNVEILED.

The year "1912" opened its gate to him and it looked as if during each month he sought to quicken his pace,—so ardently did he yearn to be busy up to the final moment. As he crossed the threshold of the new year, his mind was alert, his eye bright and his spirit eager, and he really bounded forth to this tasks. The winter, in his last years, always hit him hard and he determined that this year his grapple with low temperature should be transferred to a more southern clime and consequently he accepted invitations for meetings in Florida and South Carolina.

"Brer Hatcher took his departure for the South at the right time" writes his wife. "He was not in very good condition when he left. His physical state was all right but he had lately been through the change of Officers at the Academy bearing the responsibility and strain of it all alone. Like many old men his anxieties got the upperhand and made him nervous. He felt, as I did, that it was better for him to get out of it all for a while"

To his wife he writes on January 9th from Richmond:

"Monday ——— C. & O. Station 1 P. M.
"I start for Florida at 1:30 P. M. today. . . . I had another fall and got bruised up, but I must keep a going."

Digitized by Google

To many it seemed almost pathetic that with his uncertain health, and at his advanced age, he should be putting off in mid-winter to Florida, a land of strangers. But go he would and go he felt he must. He knew that his end could not be much longer delayed and for that reason he felt that he must be more active than ever. From Sanford, Florida he writes me on Jan. 11th regarding his Christmas at Fork Union:

". . . Christmas brought me many things to make me glad, but the utter lack of grandchildren put a sense of loss in me which I could not shake off. Nor was I free from the wear and tear of local strifes which seem to continue to grow rather than to abate.

"In spite of these things life was quiet and rich in comfort for me. I preached in Richmond on Sunday and left for this narrow neck of land Monday. . . I see a riot of difficulties in the way of success [in the meetings] but. . my heart is full of hope. . . I am very busy. . . .—"

There was one thing that indicated that he feared possible collapse on his Southern trip and that was that he took with him a younger, Virginia minister, Rev. J. B. Williams, who helped him greatly, not only by his companionship, but also by his leadership of the music in the meetings. I have had troubles on this trip" he writes Rev. R. H. Winfree, "I had a fall and, in addition to wounding each of my knees and each of my elbows, I put my right thumb out of commission. It hurts like Scot and is of little use." He also tells of his losing his valise with all his good clothes and adds, "It annoys but it does not kill and I am doing fairly well."

On the 16th he writes me from Sanford:

"Our meeting promises to do much good, though the wheels of its progress are deep in the mire of the world. . . Trade, traveling and frolicking give religion a hard road to travel in Florida."

Regarding his absconding valise he writes to Orie:

Digitized by Google

". . . . I have some news to relate. I put about one-half of those cravats in my valise for sporting purposes while in the South. The valise seems however to have gotten some of the hot stuff of Christmas into its head and unceremoniously —in fact without telling me good-bye—dashed off to parts unknown without even dropping me one cravat to console me in my desolation. I believe it is agreed that I am the most picturesque specimen of old age that has hooked Sanford for some time. By mistake I put on an old coat in starting from home that had not been allowed to go out of the gate for probably a period of six years and that's the coat in which I am doing my preaching and social functions etc. My pants are the pathetic relics of a suit which some robber hand despoiled the pants of two years ago and the vest belongs altogether to a suit of another pattern and figure.

"Florida is very cold and my partly colored garb is of a sort that is thin in one piece, thick in another and medium yet in another. As to the trivial matter of my appearance that is a changing thing anyhow and I need not dwell upon it.

"Will I recover my valise?—hope is said to spring immortal in the human breast—it does not seem to be performing that stunt in my case but who knows what may happen.

"*Wednesday.* "The blizzard has called in its scouting winds and the air of Florida is balm itself. I am working very hard. I leave here next Sunday and will begin with Warson Dorsett at Johnston, S. C."

Dr. Wildman, the pastor at Sanford, said he asked Dr. Hatcher one day what he ought to do with certain members who showed no evidences of piety. "Dont exclude them" he replied "wait on them," and Dr. Wildman said that the later results proved the wisdom of his suggestion. Dr. Wildman mentions another incident:

"I had full proof of Dr. Hatcher's freedom from the money-loving spirit. I had written him—when asking him to come to Sanford—that owing to financial reverses I feared our people could not pay him enough to justify him in coming so far for a meeting. He replied, 'I need money and usually get some in the meetings; but I want you to have no concern on that point.'

"The weather was cold when he came. . . . On the last

Digitized by Google

Sunday the house was packed and the power of the Lord was present to save. My plan was to make a statement and to receive an offering at the morning hour. He refused to allow me to do it. Then my plan was to take the collection at the night service, but again he absolutely forbade any mention of money because the interest was so profound. No public mention was made of money, but before he left on Monday the spontaneous offering of the people realized a very satisfactory amount.

"His preaching was with power and great acceptance to all who came." He went to Columbia where he wrote that he—"stayed two days, 'ate out' in pompous luxury among the great, delivered five addresses, was pulled out of bed about daybreak to make the train and began a meeting here slated to continue at least until Sunday, February 4th and maybe longer."

"Your life has indeed been a benediction to my soul" writes Rev. L. E. Peters of West Virginia.

"I am always glad to hear of your preaching" he writes me, "as that is the supreme joy of earth to me. Preach every decent chance that may come along." . . and then after telling of his hopes regarding the meetings and his many lines of work he added "But work is life and I am still living." Mr. Williams, his traveling companion, in a letter to Mrs. Hatcher, after telling of his pleasure in being with him, says, "His experiences with his old clothes and crippled finger have been the occasion of much amusement for us." Regarding his wounded finger he said, "It hurts me all night and the Doctor hurts it all day."

"When we would come home from the meetings at night" says Mr. Williams" he would be brim full of pleasant humor. He said of his stolen valise and his lost clothes, 'I wonder if I will not meet some of my suits on the street tomorrow. I am expecting to meet one fellow with my pants on and another with my vest on and who knows but I may meet two of my whole suits in town before I leave.' "

Mr. Williams adds that the lost suit case with its contents was valued at $120 but that Dr. Hatcher instead of allowing

Digitized by Google

his afflicted finger and the lost suit case "to become a means of sorrow to him and others he rather used it as a means of entertainment for us at Bro. Wildman's. Those were blessed days. . . ." He also adds that he and Dr. Hatcher took a night train for Johnston, S. C. "I rather insisted" he says "on Dr. Hatcher's taking a sleeper but he said, 'I curtail every expense possible; for you know there are several boys looking to me for help.' I said to him, 'Your preaching thirty years ago and your preaching now are very different' he said to me,. 'Dont you know that the sermons that I used then are gone from me.' I told him that the last sermons were plainer and, according to my judgment, far superior. His preaching, on my first acquaintance with him in the eighties was very largely from the old Testament." One of the Florida Baptist pastors, upon being introduced to him, said, "I want to shake the hand of the preacher who writes the best English of any man in the United States."

It is interesting to note that although he had his physical infirmities yet, instead of regarding himself as an aged object to be pampered and waited upon, he seemed to be busy dropping his kindnesses into other lives. For example Dr. Wildman thus writes several months later of his visit with him at Sanford:

> "There is no joy to me quite as deep as the recollection of having him for two weeks. . . last winter in the home. At every association which we attended together this year he spoke a good word for me; and in the last letter he wrote in the Herald he said, 'And Wildman pro-tem of Florida, but of Virginia forever.' "

Fork Union pulled him back for a few days of Academy toil and then he hies himself away to South Carolina again,—this time without a traveling companion. He went to Saluda to aid Rev. J. E. Bailey in meetings and Mr. Bailey writes, "As I bade him good bye [after the meetings] he said, 'God bless you; you have been so good to me. When I get to Heaven I'll tell the Lord about you.' "

Digitized by Google

At this point in his southern trip he accomplished a remarkable achievement for a man of his age and physical debilities. A school in Orangeburg, S. C., had a huge debt upon it. $65,000 was needed and he was asked by several pastors in that section to lead them in a twelve days campaign to raise that sum and save the school. It seemed preposterous to him at first but he surrendered to their appeal. "I fear it is a fool's errand on which I am going" he writes "but their oft-coming overcame me. . . and for once I am like Paul; I go, but, unlike him, I do not know that any "bonds" await me with which to pay the debt. . . . I am weighted down with Fork Union anxieties. My eyes bother me much,—or rather, my eye, for really I have but one." One marked weakness he had, and that was in the direction of yielding to cries for his help. He kept himself so absolutely at the beck and call of the needy ones around him that he left all doors to his heart unbarred and it was easy for applicants for his service to win his consent. It will be acknowledged however that in such weakness lay his best strength. During the last year or two of his life he seemed to say to all, "Here I am, Come on; get out of me what you can. If there is any good service still left in me, pull it out, and he seemed literally to lay himself on the altar of the public need. I was struck with it often when I would ask him to write for publication. He knew that he could hardly hope to live to finish another book and see it published and in the hands of the public, and therfore that what work he did on his book of Illustrations would probably bear its fruit after he was gone and yet he was always ready to dictate material for the book when I would ask him. I was eager to secure as much as possible from him and while I did not seek to burden him with it yet I was impressed with his cheerful willingness to start his brain to work no matter how dilapidated or heavily loaded he might be. His attitude seemed to be, "March ahead with the type writer; drain me of whatever I have that you need. I am happy to give it," and he would start right in, with scarcely a moment for premeditation and the typewriter's flying ticks would testify

Digitized by Google

to the rapidity of his dictation. Some times he would suddenly say, "Well, I am tired now; I'll take a nap," and it was such snatches of sleep that saved him from many a collapse and gave him fresh supplies of strength along his busy way.

But let us return to the Orangeburg School campaign. He plunged in to the enterprise of raising the $65,000 by gathering the preachers about him and mapping out a schedule of travel by which they would make a rapid dash among the churches in that section. At the first church visited—"Ebenezer"—he put up two of the preachers to make remarks, and then he followed and at the close he called out in almost cynical tones. "I wonder if there is a man here today who would give anything to save this school."

"Yes, I will" said a man "I will give one hundred dollars."

"What is your name, brother?" he asked and the corpulent farmer said that his name was "Smoke". Dr. Hatcher added "Well surely where there is such a big smoke there must be fire near by," and so it was; in a few minutes they had raised nearly $700.

Thus they went from church to church, sending their notices ahead and charging in on the people, sounding the signal and rounding up the bonds and in that happy bouyant party none were younger in spirit than the man of 77 upon whom thay had so suddenly laid the harness. He sums up the story by saying, "Through flood and storm and swamps I made a campaign for $65,000 and it resulted in pledges of largely over $80,000. It took twelve days."

Rev. J. R. Fizer, in writing about it, says:

"This campaign was perhaps the most strenous undertaking and the most trying experience that Dr. Hatcher had in his last days. The weather was unusually bleak, and the roads were next to impassable. Still he murmured not a whit, but saw the bright side of it all. There happened in the start an episode that led him to brag a bit on having a talent above that of any of the brethren,—the gift of missing the right way. We (he and I) got lost. He declared that the right road to a place was always the other one, and not the one he pointed out.

Digitized by Google

"The school was saved, its policy entirely changed, just as he advised, and its name also changed—from Orangeburg Collegiate Institute to Orangeburg College. Last session was the best in its history, and to Dr. Hatcher, more than to any other one man, belongs the honor."

A touching incident occured at this time. His Chinese boy Ah Fong Yeung, whom he had taken into his home and aided in his education at the Academy and afterwards at Richmond College, was now preparing to go back to China. He had been in New York for two or three years and now, before turning his back upon America, he desired to see his great friend and benefactor, Dr. Hatcher, and bid him farewell. And so he came to Virginia and one day, in the end of February, when the door bell at Careby Hall rang and Mrs. Hatcher went to the door, she found Ah Fong. After some words of greeting he said, "where is Dr. Hatcher?"

"He is in South Carolina" she answered not realizing what a blow her words were giving him. She said her heart went out to him as she saw the look of disappointnmet that spread over his face. He had come through the rough, wintry weather from New York to Fork Union to get his farewell from Dr. Hatcher and was met with the news that he was in another state. The thought of going back to China without seeing him cut him to the heart. Mrs. Hatcher sought to cheer him and to brighten his stay at Careby. Word was sent to Dr. Hatcher about Ah Fong's visit and in a few days the good news came back that Dr. Hatcher would come up from South Carolina and would meet him in Richmond.

"Ah Fong goes to Richmond tomorrow" writes my mother on March 1st. "Your father will meet him there Tuesday."

Dr. Hatcher reached Richmond on Tuesday and it must have been a touching picture,—that of Ah Fong and his aged benefactor having what both of them knew too well was their last meeting on the earth. Ah Fong thus describes this farewell scene:

Digitized by Google

"When I decided to return to China I wrote him a letter saying that I will pay a last visit to old Virginia, before my departure. He was on a trip in the Carolina States. He cancelled 3 engagements in order to come back to Richmond and bid me good bye. He came to Richmond on the morning train and we spent a few hours at Mr. Edloe Snead's home on Plum Street Richmond. At noon we went to the Business Men's Club for our farewell dinner. A great many men spoke to him about me. He told them that I was about to leave for home and that he came to bid me good bye. All of them said that he had done a great work for me. His face was all smiles and he said, 'I have only done my duty.'"

Dr. R. H. Pitt, who saw them, wrote in the Herald:

"Dr. Hatcher came from a distant point in the South all the way to Richmond to tell the youth good-bye. To see them together at the hour of parting was touching. We could not suppress the conviction that they would not meet again on earth."

"When we spoke our last word," continues Ah Fong, "it was on the corner of 9th and Main Street. 'Well Ah Fong, I'll have to tell you good bye here. I have to leave here soon. I only rushed here this morning in order to have a last look at you. I dont think I'll see you again in this world, but we'll meet up there. Remember whatever you do, I always feel a deep interest in you. Write me when you can. Give my love to your father.' "A hearty grip of our hands and we parted."

A few days later he writes about Ah Fong in the Herald:

"I wish the world knew this young Chinese gentleman, this modest christian, this scholarly young man. It would make them rich to know him. He lived in my house for seven years and had it for a home six years more. I never knew him to utter an untruth, nor to speak ill of anybody, nor to be coarse or indiscreet on any occasion, nor to thrust himself into any unseemly prominence. He has appeared before many American audiences and has always been heard with interest and admiration. He had hoped to finish his law course at Harvard before returning to China but so pressing is the plea of his friends that he return home at once and so boundless is his enthusiasm over the transformation of his country to a republic

Digitized by Google

that he could not resist the impulse to go home, and before this paragraph sees the light of day, he will be on the Pacific bound for Canton, the home of his youth which he left when a boy of fifteen. He goes an ardent christian young man, not a minister of the gospel, but full of the loftiest zeal for the speedy christianization of his country."

"He was criticized by some" says his wife "for giving such aid to a foreign boy, but his heart knew no limits."

Dr. Hatcher showed a tenderness for Ah Fong that was unique. It had in it a gentle respect and deference that seemed to give this boy from across the sea a sacred place in his heart. How often in the Summers at Careby Hall, as I have seen Ah Fong with his happy face and blinking eyes sitting with the grandchildren around Dr. Hatcher, or walking with him across the grounds, my thoughts would travel out into the future to the time when Dr. Hatcher would be in his grave and Ah Fong would be over in China doing his great work and would be often thinking of that country home in far away America and the kind man who did so much for him.

The scenes already are swiftly changing; in a few weeks Ah Fong is in his Oriental home. Will Dr. Hatcher's hopes regarding this fine young man be realized. What became of Ah Fong?

Let us, for a moment, run forward about a year to April 29th, 1913, when Ah Fong writes a letter to Mrs. Hatcher from China:

"My Dear Mrs. Hatcher—The government has again offered me a post as Director of Foreign Affairs at King Chow, in the Island of Hainam. This is the third time which the government has asked me to become an official. I again tried to refuse the post, as I have a very good position here in business, but the government would not hear of it, and urged me again and again to take it up. I found that the government wants me so badly and that the present crisis in China needs men of education to fill all the important posts, I have decided to give up my present position and enter into the government service.

Digitized by Google

"I will have five men to work under me, besides my private secretary and personal attendants; of course I do not care for any of them, as I have been used to do all things for myself and other things besides, but the dignity of an official here requires all these good-for-nothing things. Again, the country is not yet quite settled down to normal, and we, the officials, must have these men to protect us from any unlooked for dangers. Just think! only about a year ago I was working in a restaurant to make money in order to get a sheepskin, and here I am an official of the great Chinese Republic. Of all the credit and honor I have none, becuase they all belong to Dr. Hatcher, to you, Miss Elizabeth, to all your family, and all the American friends and all my teachers, who had helped me to become what I am. Had it not been for you and my hosts of friends, I would not have been appointed by the government three times consecutively within a period of only five months. So far as I know, there has never been any returned student who has been asked to serve the government so urgently. I don't know the reason why. The only reason I can give is that they were quite surprised to find that I cared so little for a government position, and my action baffled them."

From Hong Kong, China, came a letter from Ah Fong's father:

"My Dear Mrs. Hatcher,— . . . For a great number of years Ah Fong has received so much kindness and invaluable teachings from Dr. Hatcher and you all I feel that your family have been the maker of Ah Fong. This is indeed such a kindness that I cannot express my appreciation to you with mere words. Now Ah Fong has returned to China just starting to do something for his country, his fellow men and for the spreading of Christianity and to show that, whatever Dr. Hatcher had done for him is not a waste and that Ah Fong's work here in the future may be a comfort to him."

At this writing Ah Fong is a professor in the Baptist Theological Seminary and also at the head of a Baptist Academy in China.

This memoir plainly requires of its readers that they be good travelers for here we have them peeping into one of the lands of the Orient and now we must hurry them back to South Carolina to which state Dr. Hatcher returned after his parting

Digitized by Google

with Ah Fong. He plunges into a revival campaign at Westminister, S. C. where he writes his wife on March 13th:

"I am often touching the bottom of my strength these days, but I must not stop until the Lord lays me down. The highest joy of my heart is that I can work in the way my life has been cast. . . .

"Fork Union wears on me. It gives me the hardest strains and not a copper of income and no special opening for preaching and my life is in that. My health is better when I preach and move around. So we must pull along as best it seems to us. Give my love to the DeMotts.

"Hastily and as ever".

Regarding his meetings at Westminster the pastor, Rev. F. G. Lavender, writes:

"Dr. Hatcher's preaching drew the children. They came in crowds to every service and gathered around him at the close. . . . . It was especially interesting to see the little fellows drinking in his sermons.

"His sympathy for people in trouble was marvelous. During his stay in our home he had letters asking his advice on all manner of questions. Churches wanted pastors, a college wanted a president, a mother wanted his advice about whether or not her daughter ought to marry a certain young man and one of the Academy boys wanted his advice about buying a pair of overshoes. In answering these this great man seemed to take as much interest in the one as in the other.

"Dr. Hatcher's deep piety and consecration impressed me. I could mention several things but one will suffice. One night after I had put him to bed and put out his light, something else in the room demanded my attention for a moment. He, thinking I had gone out, began to pray aloud just as I was closing his room door. I was now on the outside and could not catch all the words, but enough was heard to reveal the fact that Dr. Hatcher was in close touch with God. He thanked God for keeping him physically able to work and for giving him work to do.

"One night after he had talked until past midnight about some of his experiences Mrs. Lavender offered him some cake. As she did so he turned to me and said, 'Isn't it a pity Eve was ever invented?' But he took the cake."

Digitized by Google

Ah Fong's reference to Mr. Edloe Snead's home in Richmond in which he and Dr. Hatcher spent several hours calls to mind the many visits which he paid in that home during the last year or two of his life. Its three fine boys constituted one of the pleasant charms of the home to him. Mr. Snead writes as follows:

"He would often stop to spend the night with us, and would come in fatigued, carrying in his right hand his small valise. He never stopped to ring the bell; he walked in, in a quiet manner, and suddenly, when he would find everything still, he would call out, 'anybody live here?' As soon as we heard that we knew who it was and always gave him a hearty welcome

"None could excel him in telling of their travels. When he arrived in our home and seemed so tired; we asked him if he did not ride in a sleeper. 'No', was his reply, then 'why'? was our question. 'Because,' he said, 'I wanted to use the money for a better purpose', and that was to help a poor boy at school. In order to help boys all that he could, he would even sit up all night in a train.

"Cousin Neal, often told him that he could afford to give liberally to the Academy, because every time he left Careby Hall it meant lots of money for him. He was very much tickled at the remark and ventured to say that he had just taken a trip to a church in ————where he was invited to speak. It did not pay him one copper, not even his railroad fare, and there were many other places where he had done this without receiving anything. He knew how to get out of money's way.

"Last summer, he and I went to a church in Chesterfield. We left Richmond about nine o'clock and reached the church about ten. After spending a very enjoyable day out there, we returned, and I remarked to him coming back that we were making fairly good time. 'No we are not,' he said 'turn him loose, and let him go along, I cannot bear for other people to pass me.'

"How he adored boys! When he came to our home, if he did not see the children, he would inquire at once for them, and if we said they were studying, a look of gratification would be seen on his face. Once he wrote a postal to little Edloe for him to meet him at the station. Somehow Edloe could not go, and I went. When he saw me a look or surprise appeared on his face, and he seemed disappointed when he saw me, because he was expecting Edloe, Jr."

Digitized by Google

He made a speech at the meeting of the Trustees of the Orphanage at Salem which made a marked impression.

"It was unique" says Dr. G. B. Taylor. "As a general thing he did not take his illustrations from history, or general biography. This day he did. He told of his visit to the world's greatest cathedral and of the tradition concerning the architect,—he had an ambition to build the greatest structure in the world. . . The application of the story was an exhortation against selfishness, and in this connection he said: 'As I look back over my life—and if I live to July 25th I will be 78 years old—I cannot remember a single act of mine that has been free from selfishness.' or some such words as that He was probably not any more selfish than all of us, but certainly in these candid words he was most frank and outspoken."

As an indication of his appreciation of kindness and of his manner of dealing with children may be mentioned an incident in connection with his little granddaughter Anna.

When the letter had come from grandfather telling of the loss of his valise with his clothes Anna was much concerned, and she came to her mother saying, "Mother I have saved up six dollars and I want to send it to grandfather." Her mother said, "Wait until father comes and he will write out a check; that can be sent better than the money." But Anna wanted to send something right away and so, in a few minutes, she came back to her mother with three cents wrapped up in a piece of brown paper and said, "I can send this to grandfather right away and I can send the six dollars when father comes," and the mother, more to please the child than anything else,—for she hardly thought that the roughly arranged little package, which Anna had tied up herself, would ever find its way to grandfather—addressed the package and mailed it with a letter from Anna and later on the check was sent for her other gift.

The little brown parcel, however, made the trip safely, was handed to grandfather and the three pennies came into his hands, and in a few days there came back to Anna the following letter:

Digitized by Google

"My Darling Little Anna,—It was way down South in Dixie that I got your letter and, as I was just leaving for home when it came, I had to wait until I got home before I answered it.

"God bless my dear granddaughter who felt so sorry for me, when I lost my clothes, that she gave me all she had to get me something to wear. That was just the prettiest thing that anybody ever did for me and I expect to think of it when I get to heaven. I have the three cents which you sent me and I will buy me something with that money and I will see you about the other money when I come. Nobody will ever know how good I felt when I received your letter. Nobody ever was that good to me before and I hope to live long enough to see you get some nice and big things. God gives to those who give to him. I long to see you. May you have many to love you in this world and crowns of gold in the world to come.

"Your Grateful

"Grandfather."

He accompanied this letter with the following on March 22nd regarding the six dollars:

"My Dear E. B.,—I have read Anna's matchless letter. It is a new type of child's religion. I accepted the money in my letter to her and you must have her send it and then in a way of which she does not know I must gradually accumulate something to her account in the bank.

"This seems the best way to do that I can think of.

"I am at home, tired in sixteen points out of eighteen and,—in the language of the mountaineer—'I am getting tireder and tireder every day'. When I get my work through on my Dedication and revival meetings in Petersburg I will compose my bones and rest up some."

His daughter Edith was planning to go abroad during the Summer to pursue a special course in music. Already she had taken an extensive course in New York and London and had taken lessons under the great Lechkitisky of Austria and her heart was set upon a second visit to the world's famous artist. She had written her father of her plans and he wrote in reply on March 22nd:

Digitized by Google

". . . Of course I long to have you at Careby whenever it suits you. You add light and cheer to me in many ways.

". . . But I am not expecting, or even willing, for you to break from the line of your destiny to console an old thing like me; indeed that is not what I need. My life is in going and working and I have had a festival of it this winter. I am hoping to spend Easter at Careby with you.

"I am wild with multitudinous things today."

In giving Edith one of his "Jasper" books he wrote on the fly leaf, "Strike no chord on earth to which heaven will not respond".

"It is a joy to see your father so free from weakness' his wife writes. "He walks over to mail a letter in the morning and will go again in the afternoon to see a base-ball game, standing around talking and will receive any number of cadets who come to air their grievances or tell their wants, and then dictate to one of the professors who will write for him until eleven o'clock."

Petersburg is the next scene of his labors and there he dedicates a church and holds revival meetings at the West End Church. In writing to his daughter Orie from Petersburg regarding his irregularity in writing to his children he says:

"My eyesight has become so feeble that it is with difficulty that I can do any writing of my own and my peripatetic habits make it impossible for me to have any steady arrangements for type writing. . . It may interest you to know that I have fattened up about fifteen pounds during the winter."

Such fattening, however, at his age was a symptom that needed to be watched. He bends himself to his tasks, and each day he works as if eagerly grateful for the new day that was his. From Petersburg he returns to Fork Union where he finds his usual accumulations of duties.

"I am home for a week" he writes "but fatigued to the point of a collapsious feeling." Nearly all the family were with him for an Easter reunion.

Digitized by Google

"We are on the porch most of the time" writes his wife, "occasionally going into the parlor with a visitor to an open fire or gathering at night in Brer Hatcher's room where he loves to keep up his stove fires and distribute peanuts, apples, oranges and candy that he brings home in his big baskets."

On April 27th he writes me the following card:

"Fork Union beat First Team of Richmond College yesterday 8 to 5. *Tell William.*"

The boys had a bon-fire and procession that night and marched over to Careby Hall and lined up in front of the house about 10 P. M. He came out and made them a speech. "He invited the team over here last night" writes his wife "and gave them a little party—having some of the girls of the town to meet them." His days at Fork Union were always crowded and it was just such days that he most delighted in.

Mrs. J. D. Carneal of Richmond had decided to present to the Academy an oil painting of Dr. Hatcher and the artist visited Fork Union that he might give him some sittings. He felt that he needed to hear his voice as well as to study his face and so he said to him one day "Dr. Hatcher, I want to hear your voice ."

"I don't know why you want to hear the voice of a worn out old shack like me" he replied. "If it was a young girl whose voice you wanted to hear then I could see some reason in it."

The portrait was presented to the Academy during the Commencement exercises by President Boatwright of Richmond College. As Dr. Boatwright unveiled the portrait bringing the familiar face into public view the audience of students, faculty and Fluvanna people broke into tumultuous applause and when he arose to respond, the applause continued long and loud and when quiet was restored he began,—"That is sweeter to me than the strains of richest music."

In presenting the picture Dr. Boatwright had said that in future years the boys of the Academy would look upon his face and be inspired to noble things. Over the platform of the

Digitized by Google

Academy auditorium the picture now hangs at every Commencement and at the opening exercises of the Academy.

It seems that in the exercises some one had spoken of a monument to Dr. Hatcher and in his response he said pointing to the Academy—"This is what I hope will be my monument."

In that scorching month of June he made another journey to South Carolina for a dedication service in Columbia where he preached three times on Sunday. He preached two Sundays at the Second Church in Richmond, and in addition he said: "I have to look after the catalogue, make arrangement about advertising and do as much stenographic work as I can."

Rev. R. T. Marsh approached him in behalf of a young man who was needing an education, and his reply was:

"I have not a dollar for him. I do not know how or where I will get it; but you send him on and I'll find it somehow. He is red-headed and has fire in him to try and I will see that he has a chance."

"June is very full for me" he wrote me on the 17th "Dedications are now brisk. I am hard at work on Catalogue of the Academy—have pretty much all of it to do."

Dr. Frost wrote him that his dearly loved friend Judge Haralson had just passed away. In his reply to Dr. Frost, he closed his letter as follows: "It is enough to bring on shouting to think that Haralson has gone up to see the Father. It makes heaven about twice as real, but makes the earth look scant and pinched and lonesome. But never mind; he still belongs to us; we have stored him away and he is now waiting to bring us into the king with honor when we get there."

"I also have been out of kelter" he writes Rev. R. H. Winfree on July 16th "and I suppose I would be sick now in certain spots if I had time to inquire about it."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XLV

1912

BUSY HERE AND THERE. ADDRESS AT JUDGE WITT'S FUNERAL. THE GRANDCHILDREN. A CROWDED WEEK. HAPPY DAYS AT CAREBY. THE END.

From far away Texas had come an invitation to him from Rev. J. V. Dickinson to attend the 25th anniversary of his marriage. In reply he writes:

". . . Texas is too far away. I cannot make the trip but friendship is a mighty traveler. It can stride its way over land and sea and not even the boundless plains of Texas can defy friendship's loving invasions.

"My friendship has to start on the day of the event and will land at the altar when your vows are renewed but its credentials cannot fly so fast and while this letter will arrive after time it will testify that you are remembered at Careby Hall on the bridal day."

He received a letter from his best and life-long friend, Dr. J. R. Bagby, in which he said:

"I must see you oftener so as to cheer me up. We must not drift apart now. I was preaching on friendship a little while ago and while talking about it I thought of the tender strong tie that had bound us so closely together for so many years. How sweet and precious the link has been and still is. It must not grow less so, and shall not, so far as I am concerned."

He left Fork Union for King and Queen county about August 1st and stopped in Richmond where he met his young friend Rev. R. H. Winfree and together they went up into the

Digitized by Google

Business Men's Club room on the eight floor for luncheon. After taking their seat near the window which gave a commanding view of Manchester and the country beyond he said: "Get up Robert and let me have your place I want to take a look at my beloved Chesterfield. You are going there this evening and I cant go". While they were eating a somewhat youthful gentleman sauntered over and with a swinging voice said: "How is my venerable friend Dr. Hatcher?" The word "venerable" seemed to touch him in a vital spot and he replied in an almost accusing tone:

"Venerable" you say. "Will you allow me to remark that I have to take the train at half past three, get off at Lester Manor, take the stage and go to Walkerton and then six miles to Mr. Fleets; spend the night and next morning preach at Bruington and that evening drive to St. Stephens and at night to Dan Fleets and next morning go to Walkerton and then by stage to Lester Manor and there take train to Richmond; and now if you have any young fellow that can do any better than that trot him out."

"I went with him to the train to help him with his satchel" says Mr. Winfree. "As we sat talking he said to me, 'Bob, I am always in trouble about you.'

"I said, 'Doctor, what are you in trouble about me for?'

"He replied, 'Last year you were looking so pale and weak I thought you would die and leave me; now you are looking so well, I am grieved because I fear I shall die and leave you.' "

In so many of his conversations in these months his words dropped intimation that he thought he would soon receive his final call.

He went on his circuitous and arduous journey that afternoon preaching on the next day at old Bruington Church, about which he thus writes:

". . . Just forty-seven years ago, while yet young and raw I assisted Dr. Richard Hugh Bagby in a revival meeting at Bruington; and I wished before my eyes close to the scenes of

Digitized by Google

earth to look upon the historic old church once more. I reached there after dark on Saturday, and left before light on Monday."

He hurried back to Richmond where he had to preach the funeral of his long time friend Judge S. B. Witt,—a gentleman whom he held in high and affectionate esteem. Only a few days ago a gentleman said to me,—when I told him that I was writing the present biography, "You ought by all means to put into it the wonderful sermon that he preached at the funeral of Judge Witt." The Judge had refrained from making any public religious profession until a year or so before his death, and Dr. Hatcher selected the case of Moses whom it took God forty years to bring into his active service as the basis for his remarks about Judge Witt. The Grace Street Auditorium was packed with a congregation that included many of Richmond's most distinguished Jurists and professional men and the sermon impressed profoundly the audience by its unique and eloquent treatment of the subject. It was shortly before this that he went one Monday morning into the Ministers' Conference of Richmond.

"It was report day" says Dr. G. W. McDaniel. "He listened to the brethren as, one after another, they told in short and simple manner of the doings of the Lord in their churches. When all the pastors had finished, the venerable leader arose. His face was flushed with enthusiasm, his eye sparkled with delight, his voice trembled with emotion. He spoke thus: 'My brethren, I am on the heights this morning. For over fifty years I have known this conference and for most of my ministerial life I have been a member. In all that time I have never heard such thrilling reports. We never had a more efficient ministry than I see around me to-day. I am glad I am alive and I can die happy, seeing that our Baptist cause is prospering in this city, which I love above all others.'

His words fell like a benediction upon our hearts; they strengthened our hands for present tasks and nerved our arms for larger undertakings. Coming from one so competent to judge and so careful in speech, they were a positive inspiration."

In August the following paragraph appeared in the Herald

Digitized by Google

and was copied in other state papers going the rounds from one to the other.

"Dr. William E. Hatcher, who passed the seventy-eighth mile post last week, has gained twenty-five pounds in weight in recent months, and finds rest in work. Attending two or three district associations each week, dedicating churches, holding protracted meetings and guiding the destiny of Fork Union Military Academy, are a few of the means used in consuming the energy of his perpetual youth."

His wife said that he had kept saying during July "I am so lonesome. I want Eldridge to come on. I want to talk with him." He was away on his travels when we arrived at Careby for our Summer visit but he touched the home base in a few days. His health and spirit seemed to be at high water mark. He would stay a few days, then start out on his travels and in a few days would return. What a welcome he would receive from the grandchildren,—and in fact from all the Carebyites. During this season he ate all his meals either in his study or out under the trees,—not once in the dining room—and everybody at Careby Hall were his waiters. At this time he was eager to plunge into his mail on his return for his anxiety about the number of students for next session was always great at this season. His eye scanned his mail rapidly and seemed to pick out its salient messages quickly. In the meantime the grandmother, the children and grandchildren would be piled around the room.

"Tell me some news" he would call out and we would have th report the latest items of village life.

As usual he always came back loaded with his baskets and bundles of candy, cakes and fruit. "Oh, my. Are'nt they good?" "Is'nt grandfather nice?" "Grandfather you must come back again the next time you go away." Such were the exclamations that greeted his return.

"Bed time" would be called out in a short while, and then would come the appeal,

Digitized by Google

"Oh, mother; just let us sit up a little longer—just a little longer for grandfather has been away, you know."

But that night others would come in,—Stephens, the Academy treasurer, or Capt. Snead or yet others and thus the talk would run on towards midnight.

Next morning his stenographer would appear on the scene immediately after breakfast and together they would attack the large mail pile. After several hours of dictation he would call out:

"William! Quoits!" or "Virginia! Dominoes!" "I'm coming" was the reply and in a few minutes the perplexities and burdens that his mail had flung upon his mind were gradually rolled off in the enthusiasm of the game. When it was all over he was ready to dictate his Sunday School lessons or an article for the papers, or to have a conference with a Trustee, a Summer pupil, or a professor or some other visitor, or to take a brief nap on his couch or a frolic with the grandchildren. Every game would usually wind up by grandfather tripping off into his room and soon emerging upon the porch with a bag or basket of fruits or sweets.

During the week beginning August 11th—with seventy-eight years upon him and amid the heat and dust of travel—he visited three Associations in widely separated parts of the state. He spent Tuesday at the Concord Association at Chatham where he was given a loving welcome, and where he took active part in the meeting. "He was radiant and charming in conversation, sparkling with humor as of old" writes one of the visitors. His speech on education was said to be full of vigorous thought and "was delivered with intense earnestness and in the rare and interesting style peculiar to Dr. Hatcher." Next morning at five o'clock he was "up and gone" on his journey to the Piedmont Association where upon his arrival he was requested by the Association to preach before the body. His subject was "Zaccheus, or the evidences of a converted heart." "He seemed very feeble when he commenced" says one who heard him "but, as he talked, he gather-

Digitized by Google

ed inspiration, and I never heard him preach with greater force or more telling effect." He left that afternoon and on the next morning he was in a far-away section of the state at the Potomac Association and there too he was requested upon his arrival to preach before the body. His text on this occasion was "Leadership in the kingdom of God." A young minister who heard him remarked to a friend, "It would take me 200 years to be able to preach a sermon like that."

That afternoon there came a lull in a collection which the Association had ordered to be taken for the purchase of a church building.

"Dr. Hatcher, help us take this collection" said some one. He arose and replied: "Brethren if I am to do this work it must be done quickly as I have only a short time to remain." The automobile was already at the door to bear him to the depot. He sounded the appeal and called for subscriptions and one by one they began to come in. After a while the subscriptions stopped coming and he prodded his audience in a genial way. $112 of the total $500 was still needed and a brother called out, "I will give as much as John Kinchelow." Dr. Hatcher accepted the challenge and turned his gaze in search of Mr. Kinchelow. The old man, now grown somewhat feeble, was out in the yard but upon learning that he was wanted in the house quickly appeared at the side door, while the audience watched with eager expectancy for the next move. Dr. Hatcher explained to Mr. Kinchelow the situation and he replied, "I will give one-half of the amount needed." This completed the sum and sent a happy ripple over the audience. Dr. Hatcher then made a tender address to the Association and closed by turning to his friend, Mr. Kinchelow and saying:

"John, the beloved, this is not the first time you have helped me through a difficult place in a collection. Our work will soon be done and I have an impression that neither of us will ever meet at another Association."

Digitized by Google

At this Potomac Association he spoke words to a young man, Mr. G. H. Payne, that led him to enter the ministry. He said to several persons at the Association that he had an oppressive premonition that his end was not far away. "Dont let us go to bed" he would say to his friends, "let us sit up all night."

From the Potomac Association he hurried to Culpeper that he might drive into the country to talk with a boy about coming to the Academy.

"He was going to take the lad practically at his own charges," says Dr. E. W. Winfrey who carried him to the boy's home, "agreeing to almost, if not quite, 'foot the entire bill.' How sanely and sagely he talked that morning. . . . more than once mentioning the fact that he might not be with us much longer,—and yet, as always, full of ideas and plans and enterprises."

He reached Careby on Friday night about eight o'clock, very tired. After finishing his supper in his room and reciting the events of his trip to some of the family who were gathered around him and to Captain Charles Snead who had come over to meet him and who was one of the Trustees he said: "Well Charles, I have come to the end of my row and you and the others will have to take up the work now." He spoke as one exhausted after making a supreme struggle.

But next morning he was up with a new light in his eye and with an alert step. He had arranged to spend the following week at Careby.

The days that followed were packed with toil which was interspersed with games and jollifications with the grandchildren. Ofttimes, as the children and grandchildren would be scattered over the lawn—some in hammocks, some in chairs and others seated on the grass—grandfather would appear at the front door with a box, or bag, in his hand and, running his eye over the yard in search of the young ones, he would start down the steps and out on the grounds, going from one group to another with his "treat", until he had made the entire

Digitized by Google

round. Sometimes he would repeat the circuit before going in and this would be usually repeated one or more times during the day and during each day.

To Rev. Andrew Broaddus he writes:

"Fork Union Va., August 19, 1912.

"My Dear Andrew,—I was really homesick for the Hermon Association—that is, home-sick for you. I was tangled up in several directions and could not come to your kingdom this time. But I love you just the same and will never weary of thinking of you. All the older generation, except Bagby, and Charles Ryland, seem to have fled from the stage and they are practically trembling their way off and I seem to be lingering superfluous. I have to depend upon you and Julian and Lake and Winfree for even the semblance of contemporaries, but you are not contemporaries and this is all the better for me. I can feed upon your remaining strength and be the richer for it. I long to see you at Fork Union.

"Hastily, but very sincerely,
"W. E. Hatcher."

"P. S. Tell Gay she has not sent me the two boys as I told her and ask Kirk what he is doing about it."

On Wednesday he wrote to his beloved R. H. Winfree:

"Fork Union, Va., August 21, 1912.

"My ever dear Robert,—My soul hungers for you, my thoughts go after you constantly and I long for a good easy time with you. I suppose that your meeting is going on at Mt. Hermon this week and I keep thinking about you. . . . I have been working very hard this Summer. The outlook for the session is fair but I am not sure it will be as good as it was last year.

"Very hastily,
"Wm. E. Hatcher."

"Eldridge, what is going to become of the Academy when I am gone?" he asked me one day that week in anxious tones. On another day he said,—in a manner betokening the burden that was on him,—"Tell me what to do with the Academy."

Digitized by Google

One day he said, "Eldridge, why don't you buy the Academy?" I told him that the new man whom he had secured for headmaster might come and like the school and might buy it himself and thus insure its permanency. His constant solicitude as to the future of the school was so apparent to us all that we were ever seeking to cheer him. He himself knew that its burdens were too heavy for his weakening shoulders and that it was threatening his life and yet the life of the Academy seemed to him more important than his own. One night he said to his wife, in connection with the uncertainty as to the Academy's future: "Well, even though it should die, it has at least given me the opportunity of helping many a poor boy get an education."

If some one could only have told him at that time that in about two years after his death the Virginia Baptists through their Education Commission would inaugurate a campaign to raise $50,000 with which to equip the Fork Union Academy and that at its head would be a young man, Mr. C. E. Crosland, a Cecil Rhodes graduate of the Oxford University, highly gifted and fully sympathetic with the ideals of the founder and apparently fitted and destined to build up the Academy into large and splendid proportions,—but ah, this he did not know.

Each day had its variety of tasks and incidents. He seemed determined that all his many guests should be kept happy, that his stenographer should be kept busy and that no idle hours should hang on his hands.

The Chicago Standard in its issue of that week said: "Dr. W. E. Hatcher of the South recently celebrated his 78th birthday and is still one of the most active and efficient workers among his brethren. . . . Years do not count with some men who know how to keep young." One day he and his daughter-in-law were seated on the lawn, not far from each other, and yet apparently unconscious of the other's presence, when he was heard to say, as if communing with himself, "I was not born for popularity but I was born for friendship." One afternoon he started over to the Academy grounds pre-

Digitized by Google

pared to stop a base ball game unless the players first complied with regulations which he, as Superintendent of grounds, had made regarding the use of the Campus; and those who saw him start off down the hill that afternoon noticed that he still had in him his old fighting spirit,—to be called into action if the occasion demanded it. Very soon however the shouts on the base ball grounds announced that all difficulties had vanished and the game was under way, and no one of the spectators was more enthusiastically interested in the contest than the old gentleman of seventy-eight. On Thursday night the trustees delighted him by their hearty response to his appeal that they would cooperate in providing a Water Plant for the Academy. "We had a great meeting tonight" he said with radiant face as he came out in the yard after the trustees had dispersed and it was reported by the trustees that he offered one of the most impassioned prayers for the Academy that night that they had ever heard from him.

Friday found him with a busy schedule,—walking over to the Bashaw's and the Wright's for conferences about the Academy and certain improvements for the village and as he climbed the Careby hill on his return and approached us on the lawn he moved with an unusually alert step and surprised us as he said "Well I believe the Lord is going to let me live two or three years longer" Never during his later years had we heard from him such a remark. In speaking of his plans he would always interject the proviso "that is, if the Lord lets me live." He bore himself that day as if he had received a fresh and sudden supply of physical and mental vigor.

On that night the building and grounds at Careby Hall were thronged with the Fork Union people. The neighbors, young and old, with their children were there and their jovial chats and merry laughter filled the air. About 9:30—after indulging in varied social festivities—they moved to the front and listened to an address from Dr. Hatcher as he stood on his front porch with his wife at his side. He spoke to them on the importance of making certain improvements in the village and

Digitized by Google

closed his address by pointing the young people to high ideals. Late that night, after bidding me good night in his room, saying "God bless you" he went into conference with his Academy treasurer.

Next morning early he was at his open window singing and whistling and at about 7:30—*he fell.* Yes; that vigorous body that had stood and toiled and traveled and borne burdens for seventy-eight years had at last fallen to the earth. His wife, in the next room, heard him say in subdued tones "Everybody better get up; everybody better get up." Upon hurrying to his side she found him lying with his body partly upon the couch and partly on the floor. "I have been here long enough; I must be going" I heard him say somewhat huskily as I approached him. It was a stroke of paralysis that rendered helpless his left side. Later on, not seeing his wife, he said; "Where is Jennie?" Despite all efforts of physicians and loved ones and friends the other side soon felt the fatal touch and shortly before ten o'clock his body became quiet and his spirit had taken its flight for the other world.

His words concerning Dr. J. B. Jeter, seem appropriate in his own case:

"He died splendidly—in all his ripened, glorious prime. He did not crumble into decay, nor shrivel into imbecility. Disease did not waste and age did not shatter him; but, like the imperial leader of Israel, he came to Pisgah with eye undimmed and strength unabated. I count his death pre-eminently happy. When his hour came to go his loving father put his finger upon the enginery of his heart—that heart which had been beating, beating, beating for nearly eighty years and beating always highest for his father's honor. He felt the solemn touch and the vast machinery of his life trembled, groaned, creaked and shivered; but only for a moment and then standing suddenly still, his glad spirit was out and gone, upward and away in its celestial flight. It was a translation in its suddenness and an ascension in its triumph and glory."

While the family were preparing for the burial at Fork Union a delegation of deacons from his old Grace Street

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google